TRUTH APPLIED
OR
BIBLE READINGS

REV. R. G. PEARSON

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OR

BIBLE READINGS.

BY

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DEDICATION.

TO THE BELOVED WIFE OF MY YOUTH, whom God gave me, and who has proved not only an encouragement to every good word and work, but also a loving and faithful, a wise and prayerful helpmeet in all my toils as a pastor and evangelist, these readings are dedicated.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

THE editor is a sort of pioneer who explores and re-explores a book, first in the manuscript and afterward in correcting the proofs, before the readers are admitted to its perusal. This task of the editor is sometimes accounted irksome; but the labor of preparing this volume of simple and direct Bible discourses has not been unmingled with enjoyment and instruction. With each perusal the editor has received help and spiritual inspiration, and he feels sure that similar profit and pleasure await every earnest reader of these pages. The lucid interpretation of scripture by scripture, the homely but appropriate and telling illustrations, the simple and eloquent directness of language, and the devout spirit of earnestness and consecration that pervades every page and sentence, will, it is believed, commend this little volume to all who are seeking to know and obey the truth.

J. M. HOWARD,
Book Editor.

PREFACE.

In all attempts to instruct and benefit our fellow-men there are two things of vital importance—first, to find, second to apply, the truth. The inspired word of God is the only infallible standard of truth; therefore, in the readings submitted, no attempt has been made to search for or apply scientific or philosophic truth, but simply to apply the word of God. This word, we are told in 2 Tim. iii. 17, is such, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;" consequently the Scriptures, by the author of these readings, are deemed of sufficient authority, scope, and adaptation without any human supplements. Futhermore, since God, in Jeremiah xxiii. 28, says: "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully," the attempt has not been so much to interpret, expound, or explain God's word as to "speak faithfully" in applying the truth.

In "Truth Applied," the object has been in the plainest, clearest, and most direct way, to reach the conscience through the understanding; and to this end the flowers of rhetoric have been studiously avoided; the circumlocution of high-sounding phrases has been rejected, and the one aim has been so to speak that all could understand, and that the "common people would hear gladly."

The readings were prepared and delivered *extempore* so far as manuscripts were concerned. They were

also prepared not at my leisure, but on various occasions according as some circumstance would arise in the midst of a series of meetings to call for a special reading. They were spoken without notes except marginal references in my Bible, and were taken down as spoken, by a stenographer. My health and strength were such as to prevent my giving them any thing like a careful or thorough revision.

The style is that of a speaker dealing with the masses. These readings were spoken to the multitudes with a design to help rather than entertain, and they are now published for the same class and with the same object, and are therefore intentionally free and colloquial in style.

If God will use them in book form as much as when delivered, then the object in publishing them will have been attained. God grant that they may be as "bread cast upon the waters," and, in spite of their inelegancies, may they be a blessing to the many who requested their publication, and also to many who never heard them. R. G. PEARSON.

Asheville, N. C., August 24, 1889.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Qualifications of Workers,	1
At Jesus' Feet,	21
Christ and Believers,	42
Conditions of Effectual Prayer,	64
Pure Religion,	88
A Mother's Influence,	110
Laying Up Riches,	130
The Forgiveness of Enemies,	149
The Work of the Spirit,	166
The Shepherd and the Sheep,	188
Confession,	206
Looking Unto Jesus,	225

QUALIFICATIONS OF WORKERS.

THE topic of our Bible reading is "Qualifications of a Worker for God." The text is Mark xvi. 20: "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

The early disciples, and especially the apostles, went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them. Now, if the Lord was working with them, they were working with the Lord; and if they and the Lord were working together, they were working for the Lord. They were therefore workers for God. And what else? "The Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

"Signs following." Some people believe the days of miracles are past. You can not find any authority for that in God's word. The necessity for that kind of miracles that were needed to give divine sanction to the introduction of the Bible has passed away. But miracles have not passed away. What is the regeneration of a soul but a divine miracle? Creation is a miracle, and a regenerated soul is a new creation in Christ Jesus. Therefore miracles are not past; the necessity for miraculous and exceptional signs has passed.

And again, "Confirming the word with signs following." Some of those signs followed as divine sanctions of the apostles' mission. Some of them followed as ordinary signs of preaching the true gospel in any age. Just so certain as God is the same and the gospel is the same and humanity is the same there will be signs following the preaching of God's gospel to-day, and on down to the end of the ages. If the gospel is preached in the fear of God, and in reliance on the Holy Ghost, there will be the signs following of deep, genuine conviction of sin; of thorough, genuine repentance; of a sound, biblical, Holy Ghost regeneration; there will be the signs following of the shaking of the dry bones in the valley, the returning of the wandering sheep, the coming back of the backsliders, and the building up of God's people on their most holy faith. Those are some of the signs that followed when the apostles preached, and they will follow to-day if we are preaching the gospel.

Now, before beginning this discussion, there is one very just and clean-cut distinction that I want you to bear in mind—namely, the distinction between working for God and being engaged in church work. "Why," says somebody, "that is the same thing, and it seems to me you are making a distinction without a difference." It may seem that way, but it is not. Of course, every one who is a worker for God is engaged in church work, but the converse of the proposition is not true, viz., that every one who is engaged in church work is a worker for God.

I will give you an illustration. In the political world we have first a patriot, and then we have a political partisan. Now, what is a patriot? He is a man who loves his country first, last, and all the time, over and above his party, or any other party. Now, what is a political partisan? He is a man who loves his party, let it be Democratic, Republican, or what not, better than he loves his country; and as proof of it, he will stuff a ballot-box, and move heaven, earth, and perdition itself to advance his party. When such a political partisan is at work in politics he is not working for his country; he is working for his party. And there is the difference between a partisan and a patriot.

There is precisely the same difference between working for God and being an ecclesiastical partisan. A man who is working for God loves God and his cause over and above any one part or section of the church; he is working for God's glory, for his kingdom, and for souls. What is an ecclesiastical partisan? He is one of those who would compass sea and land to make one proselyte; who would explore heaven and earth in order to advance his particular ecclesiastical clique. And such church workers have but very little interest perhaps in keeping a soul out of hell if they are not going to get that soul into their church.

Now, let us be a little more specific. I have seen good Christian women who would almost work their hands off at a church supper, and sometimes in a raffle, and in various other ways, legiti-

mate and illegitimate, to get a new carpet on the floor, or new stained glass windows, or a silver service. But try to get one of these same women to win a soul, or to teach a penitent. "O no," is the answer, "I am too modest; I can't do any thing at all." You are working for the church and not for God.

I have seen men that would do any thing and every thing almost for their church, and when it came right down to a hand-to-hand contest, to locking shields with the ungodly and pulling them, as Jude says, out of the fire and winning souls for Christ, these same men say, "I have nothing to do in that line," and, "All that I have to do is to see that my church is kept up," and so on. Now, I believe in church organization and in church lines; I believe in denominations. We can't get along without them. I believe if you are a Baptist you should be a Baptist from head to foot; and so with the Presbyterians and Methodists and Episcopalians, and so with every orthodox denomination on earth. Stay in your own church, and work there. But don't be such a Baptist, or such a Methodist, or Presbyterian, or Episcopalian, or such an any thing else, as that all the religion and zeal and work you have is to look to nothing higher or beyond your particular little church. If you do that you are an ecclesiastical partisan, working for your church, and not working for Christ and for God.

I belong to the church; I love my own church better than I do any other; not that it is any better,

but I know it better, and have become attached to it, and I want to live and die there. But I have a higher office than to be an ecclesiastical recruiting officer. I am for souls and for God, and then let them go and join what church they please. Let us all stand in solid phalanx against hell and the devil, and win souls to God and convert the world to Christ, if we can.

Now, may I give you just one other illustration of the difference between work for God and church work? I was holding a meeting in a certain city, and going one day to the home of an old Christian lady, I there met a stylish, godless woman, who, in the course of conversation, pointed to a church near by and said, "Mrs. ——— and I built that church." I said, "You and she built it? I didn't know you were a Christian." "I am not. I don't care any thing about religion. I don't belong to the church, and I am a little skeptical. But I built that church." "How did you do it?" "I had bazaars, suppers, festivals, raffles, church concerts, musicales, and so on." "Why did you do it?" "The only reason in the world was that I ruled the young folks around me. I like to lead, and the papers gave me some very nice puffs. Then, too, I had some magnificent concerts, and I am fond of music, and I did it for my own entertainment." There was a woman engaged in church-work—she had built a church. But was she working for God? God's glory never once entered that woman's head nor heart, but her motive was her own glory, pastime, amusement.

Have a new carpet for your church if you want it; have a new silver service if you need it. That is all right. Work for your church, but, dear men and women, don't spend your life just simply working for that, losing sight of God and his glory and the salvation of immortal souls. How many of you, all of your lives, have been simply engaged in church work. You thought you were working for God, but you were mistaken about it!

What are the qualifications of a worker for God?

We need first of all, love for Christ—2 Cor. v. 14, 15: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Did you notice that phrase, "The love of Christ constraineth us?" Here is the love that Christ had for us, an eternal, infinite, abiding love. What did that love do? It brought Christ all the way from the skies, and it brought him down here. He was born in a manger, so poor that he had not a cradle in which to be rocked. He led a life of toil, poverty, suffering, shame, sacrifice; men buffeted him and spit upon him. Why would Christ let men spit upon him? Because he loved you and me, and he loved us so well that he was willing to be spit upon, and then to be crowned with thorns. Why would he be crowned with thorns, when he could have summoned many legions of angels? Ah, it was love. Love said: "Angels, keep your

distance; this is the only way to save men." He loved men enough to do that, and to die on the cross between two thieves. O matchless love, the love of Jesus for us! It is the love of God, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, as we are told in the fifth chapter of Romans. That love in our hearts goes right back, right out, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and it makes us love him above every body else and every thing else. And while we love our country, we love our Savior better, and while we love wives and husbands and children, we love our Savior better; and while we love our respective churches, we love our Savior better; and it is a warm, deep-seated, earnest, genuine love.

What will this love do? It will constrain us, impel us, propel us, compel us to do—what? Ah, to glorify him, to keep his holy commandments, and to follow his footsteps. He said, "Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me." He said, "Let your light so shine that others may see it;" and he said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you;" and he said, "If a man love me, he will keep my word." Friends, this love for Christ is the great secret of all consecration to God, the secret of all true work, and the key to all success and efficiency in God's service.

Now, let us get at the principle here, and the trouble also. You find a great many church members all over this country who have about this idea: Working for God, working for Jesus, talking to sinners, reading God's word to penitents, trying to

win souls, doing any thing in God's vineyard—why, that is a kind of drudgery; and a great many Christians want to get rid of it, want to shirk it, want to throw it off on the head of the evangelist, while he is present, and afterward on the pastor. That pastor will be killed who will do what a modern church wants him to do.

Why do you look at this work for God as drudgery? I will tell you why. You need more deep, warm, genuine, earnest love for Jesus down in your heart. You need less of your ecclesiastical partisanship; you need more of this deep, warm love; for when we love a person or an object we don't regard what we do for him as drudgery. Jacob's seven years' service for Rachel seemed but a short while. Why? The Bible says because of the love that he had for her. Love makes work a delight.

Take a practical illustration. Here is a mother who has a darling little one lying over there in that cradle, and the little one is sick. There she sits all night long, and she rocks that cradle, soothes that feeble little brow. She takes the cloth and dips it in the water, and then cools the parched tongue. She will sit there all day in the long July or August heat and fan and soothe that little one. Suppose some one would come in and say: "Madame, don't you regard it as a great drudgery and tax to sit there and rock that cradle all day and all night?" Her soul would resent such a suggestion. No; she feels, "It is my darling little one; it is my child; I love my child, and here I am

going to stay as long as my darling needs me, and I have any strength left." Why is it not drudgery? The secret of the whole thing is simply a mother's love. The little child is no profit, no benefit to her; it does not know she loves it, it is so young. It is simply her love for the little one. If you love Jesus, who loved you, if you love him with all your heart, if you love him with a deep-seated, abiding, genuine, heart-felt, Holy-Ghost-implanted affection, you will not regard it as drudgery to work for Jesus. You will not regard it as something to be got rid of, but you will delight in it, and thank God for it, and you will say, "My meat and drink is to do the will of my Master." Yes, "for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Drudgery? I thank God I have n't found it so. I love to work for Jesus, and I am sorry that I can not work all the time.

Dear friends, that is what we want. It is love for Jesus. Do you see that steam engine standing down yonder? The steam box is full of steam, and there are not enough men in this city to hold that engine still on the track. It can't stand still; the very steam that is in it compels it to move. Just so, you take a cold, formal, stiff, stilted, starched church member, and fill him with the Holy Ghost, fill him with the love of Christ, deep and heart-felt, and then what will happen? He will have the same experience that Peter and James and John had when they were told that they should speak no more in that name. "We can not but speak, we must work, we can not hold our

tongues." Ah, my friends, that is what we want. And I hope every saint will send up just one prayer, "Lord Jesus, increase my love for thee."

But the second qualification of a worker for God is love for souls—2 Cor. v. 20: "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

What was the great secret of Paul's life? You read about his missionary tours, about his great evangelistic campaigns. What was the secret of his self-denial, zeal, consecration, endurance of scourging and shipwreck? The one great secret of it, next to his love for Jesus, was his love for souls. Paul loved men; he loved their immortal spirits, and he so loved them that he was willing to go out and to spend and be spent in winning them to Jesus Christ. If we love men we are going to work for them. If we love any thing or any body, we will always work in that direction. That is the secret of the great success of the missionary tours of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was because he loved men. It is the secret of the great work of all men who are to-day successful under God's command. It is love for souls.

Here are your children; you speak to them sometimes and they speak back in not the right kind of a way. They disobey you, they are ugly, they are pettish, they are petted. You will not be willing to acknowledge this, perhaps, but you know it just the same. What about those children? You do n't cast them off and ostracise them and disinherit

them whenever they misbehave. Why not? Because you love them. And just so, precisely, if you love your fellow-men, if you love souls, you will not cease working for them just because they ruffle your patience; just because when you speak to a man he says, "It is none of your business if I want to go to hell." If you love souls you will not be so particular about their elbowing you off, or slighting you, or giving you the cold shoulder. If you love them you will keep on working for them, and continue to work for them in private and in public, in prayer and in conversation, trying, in every way, to win them to the Lord Jesus Christ. Sons of God, we do not more than half love the souls around us. Why did he not take you to heaven as soon as you were converted? Hear what the Master says: "Ye are the salt of the earth." Salt is to exert a saving effect upon that which needs such an influence. Ye are the salt of the earth. God needs you here that you may exert that saving, salutary influence upon the men and women by whom you are surrounded. But if you draw yourself all up in your shell like an oyster, and never say or do any thing for the lost and dying, never bring to bear any influence, you are missing the great mission that God gave you, and forfeiting the purpose for which he left you on the earth. You know that wonderful passage in the New Testament that says: "When he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." I think among all the people who will be ashamed when

they stand before Jesus, that man or woman will be most so who was a Christian for many years, living in the midst of sinners for whom Jesus died, and who put his light under a bushel, and hid his talent in a napkin, and went to heaven and never won a solitary soul.

Friends, I am willing to die this morning, if God wants me, and I think I am ready. If I am not, I never expect to be. I settled that question in childhood, when I was not more than six years old. "I left it all with Jesus long ago." But, let me tell you, I would be ashamed to die this morning. Why? I would be ashamed to leave a world, in which there are so many sinners, with the thought that I had won so few souls to the Lord Jesus. I would be ashamed to walk those streets of the New Jerusalem, and look at the blood-washed millions there, and feel "There are merely a few here that I won to Jesus."

Dear saints of God—you who are running around after this little old world, and trying to keep up with this hollow, abominable society—of what account are such worldly pursuits? O how will you feel, you saints of God, if you stand before Jesus without winning a single soul? If you ever win a soul; if you ever sit down by a poor, penitent sinner, and read God's word, and see that soul drink it in, and see that countenance light up as Jesus is born in the soul the hope of glory, that will be a foretaste of heaven—joy on earth—glory obtained below. That is eating the grapes of Eshcol before we cross the river. I hope every

saint will pray "God grant me the grace, the privilege, the honor and glory to win at least one soul to Jesus." But you must love souls if you are going to work for them.

Some people who belong to the church and say they are Christians, are always standing around on their stilts and on their dignity. They are so prim and precise and particular that they are shocked if every thing is not done just so and so; but the trouble is they are all the time doing nothing, because they are all the time trying to do every thing in such a precise and proper way. Suppose the house over yonder is afire, and you have a friend in it. The alarm is given when all are sound asleep. Would you stand on the order of your going? And, when you got there, would you stand on the order of your doing? No; you would do any thing. You would take that old muddy hose and pull it through the sand. You would use the oldest bucket to throw water; you would do any thing and every thing to put the fire out. What would you think of a man standing around on the street corner, all buttoned up in dress coat, white cravat, patent leather shoes, and white kid gloves? You ask, "Why don't you help put out the fire!" and he answers, "I might get my clothes dirty; I might soil my boots." What do you think of him? What is he worth? Is he a man? Has he a soul?

That is a picture of these people that are so squeamish and prim and particular that every thing must be done just so and so. And they can't help

a poor soul out of the fire; they can't bring a poor soul to Jesus Christ. They can't take any part in the gracious and glorious work of winning souls to Jesus. They are neither hot nor cold, and, God's word for it, they will be spewed out of his mouth. Dear saints, I believe in doing things decently and in order; I believe all things should be done in accordance with propriety, and I despise clap-trap. But I also despise that decency and order that never does any thing but keep decent.

See that steam-engine pulling a long freight train, muddy, dirty, sooty, and seemingly all out of gear. What does it mean? It means doing something. I have a great deal more respect for that than for the one that does nothing. Let us go to work and do something for men and souls.

The third qualification of a worker for God is a knowldge of Scripture—2 Tim. ii. 15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

"Study to show thyself approved unto God"—not unto the audience or the people, but to God. "Rightly dividing" what? Not Shakspeare, not Byron, but rightly dividing the word of God. Now, dear friends, if you are going to do that you must have a knowledge of Scripture. The Scriptures are the sickle of truth, the thing that we are to thrust in here if we are going to reap the sheaves for God's kingdom. You can't use God's word unless you are familiar with it, and have a knowledge of it. It is a sad truth that not one

out of twenty-five in this country, if you leave out the clergy, can sit down and take God's word and intelligently lead a soul to Jesus Christ. People do not study the word, and are not familiar with it. They do not know where the texts are that apply to individuals. A great many are spending their time absorbing Shakspeare and Byron and Milton and Scott and a thousand other books. They pride themselves on keeping up with literature. I like literature, and I like to see scholarly men and women; but I have very little patience with that man who calls himself a child of God, but prides himself on his literary attainments and cares nothing for God's word or his work. Let me be efficient, let me be proficient in the use of God's word, and I care very little about the rest.

It is as Sir Walter Scott said, when he was dying in the midst of his great library, "Give me the book," he said. "What book?" some one asked. The dying poet answered, "There is but one book, the Bible." Are you going to win souls to Christ, to garner treasures for God and heaven? Study God's word and know how to use it. Have a good Bible in your hand and be perfectly familiar with it. Use it in winning souls. Dear friends, you can not bring souls to God except in God's way.

The next qualification of a worker for God is faith in God—1 Cor. ii. 5: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Of course you all know this, but you need to have line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. And as

well as you know it, how often it is that you fail to do what you know? Put your faith in God.

One of the greatest troubles that an evangelist or pastor has to contend with is that people get, very wrongly, to putting their faith in him and not in God. He is nothing but a poor sinner, saved by grace. It makes no difference, from Moody down or up; unless God be there in and through and upon the man, he is as powerless as any body else.

When I was in a certain city year before last some one came saying to me, "Well, Mr. Pearson, if you can shake up this place you can shake up any thing." I said, "I could n't shake up a last year's bird's nest. I am nothing, and if God Almighty does not shake up this city it will not get a shaking up." Put not your faith in me, not in men. You have good, godly pastors, but do n't put your faith in them. Put your faith in God. It is a solemn truth that unless God convicts these sinners they will not be convicted; unless God converts them, they will not be converted; unless God saves these men they will not be saved. We can do nothing at all. Poor, helpless worms of the dust, what are we? Says God, "I am God, and beside me there is none other." Put your faith in God; look to him this morning.

The next qualification of a worker for God is separation from the world — 2 Cor. vi. 17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." Who is

he talking to? Christians. What does he say? Come out from among them. Who are meant by "them?" The unregenerate; the God-forgetting and God-defying world. Come out from among them. My friends, you must be separate from the world, as Christ was; in the world but not of the world. There is to be a line of demarcation between those who are in Christ and those who are of the world.

Let me be a little practical. Separate from what? I answer, separate from these abominable, seductive, and corrupting dances. You may say what you please about dancing, but you church members, men and women, can not dance with these unregenerate sinners in the ball-room and then come down to God's house and take those sinners and lead them to Christ. You can not do it; they will not be so led. I challenge you to put your finger on a dancing church member in the history of the church that was known to lead souls to Jesus Christ.

Separate from what? Separate from your progressive euchre parties. You can not sit down and play progressive euchre with your neighbor and your neighbor's children and then lead them to Christ in God's house. They will not be led by your sort. Nor can you desecrate God's Sabbath, and live as you list, and then lead souls to Jesus Christ.

Men, you can not walk into those saloons down yonder and get drunk, and walk these streets drunk, and then lead souls to Christ. You can not go

along here and refuse to pay your debts, your doctor's bill, and your grocer's bill, and then come and lead that doctor or grocery merchant to Jesus Christ. You can not do it.

My friends, if we are going to be workers for God we must come out and be separate from ungodliness, taking no part nor parcel in it at all. I hear somebody say, "But is n't the place for the church in the world?" Yes, it is; but that is a very different thing from the world in the church.

May I give you an illustration? Where is the place for a ship, for a boat? In the water. Yes, but that is a very different thing from the water in the boat. You may get the ship water-logged, and that is the difficulty with God's church to-day. The place for the church is the world; but we are making a mistake and putting the world in the church. Let us put the old gospel pump in the hold of the Ship of Zion and try to pump the water out.

You may make up your mind about one or two things. If you are going to be a worker for God and win souls to Jesus Christ, you must come out and live as Jesus Christ and the apostles lived. If you are not going to do that, just go along in the world, live as you list, die in your sins, and you will lose your own soul. You can not serve two masters; you can not serve God and mammon. Take your choice this morning. If you are going to work for God, let the world take care of itself; if you are not going to work for Christ, you and the world will go down to perdition together. A

worldly church can never bring the world to the feet of Jesus Christ.

The next qualification of a worker for God is devotion to the work—Phil. i. 21: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Why was this true in Paul's case? He was devoted to God's work. Dear saints, do you know one chief reason why you win so few souls to God? It is because you have not been devoted to him. Some of you have been devoted to pleasure, and some to amusement, and some to business, and some to every thing else, but scarcely any body to God's church and God's work. You will never succeed in that way.

There is not a banker, nor merchant, nor professional or business man in this city who would not bankrupt his business before next year if he conducted it with as little devotion to its interests as a great many church members have for the cause of God. If a man is going to be a success as a politician, he must have devotion; as a lawyer, devotion; as a merchant, devotion; as a worker for God, devotion. Don't go to the extreme of thinking that you are to do nothing else. You are to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord in both. Let us be devoted in the work before us; it is going to test our devotion to Christ during this meeting. Are we willing to lose a little sleep and to practice a little self-denial and to work a little harder, and are we willing to endure some things a little different from what we would like to have them?

The last qualification of a worker for God is dependence on the Holy Spirit—Luke xxiv. 49: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." What was the grand qualification that those disciples needed? It was the Holy Ghost, absolute dependence on the Holy Ghost; and so it is now. Let us preach, let us pray, let us talk, let us exalt the Son, but let us depend on the Holy Ghost. It is not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. If we are going to have a glorious ingathering, it will be the work of the Holy Ghost. We are to depend on him.

AT JESUS' FEET.

LUKE vii. 38, is the text for the Bible reading, and the subject is, "At Jesus' Feet. After calling your attention to those three words, will give out seven verses of Scripture. Each verse presents a different individual, at a different time and under different circumstances, at the feet of Jesus; and shows that each one obtained just the particular thing needed, and that what each one obtained is the thing that we all need. May God help us this morning to sit at Jesus' feet and learn of him.

I have no doubt you have read the New Testament through, all of you, and some of you a great many times. Did you ever get any thing very precious and helpful and instructive out of that idea, "at Jesus' feet?" "No," you say; "I never did; I have read every mention of it in the New Testament story, but never got much benefit out of it." Do you know why? One reason is that you never stopped and collated all the passages that bear on that subject, studying them in the light of the texts and the context. That is the great reason that you have never been benefited by it. If we are going to study God's word profitably we must compare scripture with script-

ure, and illustrate scripture by scripture. We must study Scripture topically, and bring to bear all of God's word on each topic, if we want to understand it and get benefit and help from it.

There is a great benefit in focalizing and concentrating God's word on any given truth. Some bright, beautiful day you have seen the sun shining over yonder on the shingles on that roof; but the sunshine did not set them afire. Suppose you had gone over there and taken a sun-glass and held it up just above the shingles focalizing the rays of the sun on any given spot, what would have been the result? It would not have been very long before the shingles would have caught fire. You have not added any heat to the sun, or added any thing to the sun whatever. You simply concentrated, focalized, the rays of the sun on a given point, and the result of that focalizing is heat and fire and light.

Just so, friends, you take any topic in God's word; take this topic that we have this morning, "at Jesus feet;" concentrate and focalize the rays of God's word on that point, and it will not be long before your hearts will begin to burn, and your soul will be made glad, and you will rejoice in God your Savior.

I want to meet a very common error, a mistake about the Bible. A great many people have this idea, and a great many preachers and Sunday-school teachers have it: that the business of a preacher and a teacher is to throw light on God's word. That is a most egregious and consummate

error. It is not our business to throw light on God's word. You might as well talk about it being the business of a fire-fly to throw light on the noonday sun. God's word is not a dark riddle; it is not a Delphic oracle; it is a precious, divine revelation, and we need just simply to let it do its own shining. Get your fogs, smokes, ignorance, misconceptions, all out of the way, and then just focalize God's word on any given fact or doctrine, and you will not need to throw any light on it. God's word will throw the light. It is presumption to talk about us poor glow-worms throwing light on his word. What does God say about his word? He says it is a lamp, a light; he says the entrance of his word giveth light. Don't be trying to throw any light on the Bible. Just get the texts together in their own natural order, as they bear on any topic, and you will get the light.

Here is a diamond lying in the mud, sand, and dirt. What do you need to do with that diamond? Not to throw any light on the diamond, not to try to make the diamond shine, but just to take it out of the dust, and get these things away from it and out of it, and hold it up, and the diamond will do its own shining and sparkling. Just so with the blessed diamond, God's truth. Hold it up in its own light and it will sparkle and shine. Let us never start out with that delusive idea that we are to throw light on that word of truth to which we must go for light. We don't go there to carry light. Let us now focalize God's word on this subject, "At Jesus' feet," and see how it will shine.

What did the person mentioned in Luke vii. 50, get at Jesus' feet? "And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." If her faith had saved her, she had salvation; and she obtained that salvation at the feet of Jesus. Now, that is the woman we read about a while ago, who came and fell down at the feet of Jesus and began to wash them with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Every saved one obtained salvation at the feet of Jesus. Is there a saint in glory to-day? Every one that is there received salvation at the feet of Jesus. Is there an unsaved sinner in this house? Dear dying friend, what all the saints in glory and on earth have done you will have to do, if you ever obtain salvation—that is, you will have to come to the feet of the Son of God. You may talk about this religion and that religion, and this theology and that theology, but dear friend, God's word settles the question that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of fallen humanity. Hence, we read in Acts iv. 12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Now, will you lay aside your notions and your theories and your wild speculations, and become like a little child, and come like the poor publican of old, and get down at the feet of Jesus and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and put your faith in him? If you do this God will save you, and if you do not you are everlastingly lost.

What kind of salvation did that woman get? You heard the verse read. "Thy faith *hath* saved thee. Not "will" or "may" or "can" or "shall." It h-a-t-h hath done it. She obtained a present, an immediate, an instantaneous salvation, then and there on the spot. She came to that house that morning where Jesus was; she came in a sinner, a notorious sinner. Thank God, before she went out she was saved. You don't have to go through a long process to be saved. Put your faith in Jesus and he can save you in the twinkling of an eye. Will you do that this morning, dear dying man? Some of you came in here unsaved; you may go out with a present salvation. Will you trust Jesus here as your Savior? Will you trust him now and take him at his word? Right now will you believe his words when he says to you, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath eternal life?" Will you? Jesus will save you here this morning. But you say, "I am such a weak sinner, and I have got to do something to improve myself." What did that woman do to improve herself? Nothing at all. You must simply trust in Jesus.

How did she get that salvation? That is a vital question. She washed the Savior's feet with her tears; but her tears did not secure her salvation. She wiped the Savior's feet with the hairs of her head, but wiping his feet did not secure her salvation. She anointed him with the ointment, but that did not secure her salvation. What did? "Thy faith." Not thy feeling, not thy emotion,

not thy frame of mind, not thy self-improvement, not thy tears, not thy wiping my feet, not thy ointment. "Thy faith hath saved thee." That is, "you have taken me at my word, you have believed that I am the Son of God and your Savior, and you have received me as such. On account of that faith which you have reposed in me I will, and I do here and now, forgive your sins and save your soul."

Now, dear sinner, that is just the way it is with you. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. You will not be saved this morning by your weeping—I don't care how much you weep; God knows your sins are big enough and numerous and ugly enough for you to weep your eyes out; but tears will not wash away guilt. Nor will praying. Simon Peter told Simon Magus to pray to God; and Simon Magus was a sinner. That is good authority that sinners ought to pray, and you ought to pray, but don't put your faith in your prayers.

Now, to-day, this morning, will you put your faith in Jesus Christ? Will you look at it this way? "I am a sinner; Jesus is a Savior. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. He said if I believe on him I have eternal life. Lord Jesus, I take you at your word. I believe you will do what you said. You said if I would receive you you would give me the power to become a son of God. Lord Jesus, I claim the promise, I commit my soul into your hands." That is *where* the woman obtained salvation, and that is the *kind*

of salvation she obtained, and that is the *manner* in which she obtained it.

How do you suppose that woman *knew* that her sins were forgiven? What did the Savior say to her? He said, "Thy sins *are forgiven*," and then he said, "Thy faith *hath saved thee*."

I imagine after a little while that woman went out, and as she walked on the street one of those straight-laced Pharisees came up to her and said, "So you think you are saved. You think your sins are forgiven you? How do you *know* they are?" What do you suppose the woman would have said? Would she have said, "I feel so and so," or "I feel happy," or any thing of that sort? I have no doubt she felt that she was forgiven and felt very happy. But what was the highest—not the only—evidence to that woman that her sins were forgiven? It was the word of Jesus Christ. He said so, and that ended the controversy. Now, my friends, that is just the way it ought to be with us to-day. I believe in feeling; I believe in heart-felt, experimental religion; I believe in heart-felt Holy Ghost religion. But what is to be the highest evidence to a man that his sins are forgiven and that he is a child of God? Is it his feelings? or is it the word of God? Which is it to be: his frame of mind and emotions, or the word of God? That is the vital question. I answer that we will settle it just as the woman settled it, by the word of God. Read 1 John v. 13: "These things" — what things? The things in this book.—"These things

have I written unto you"—unto whom? "unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" —for what purpose? "that ye may know that ye have eternal life." That is God's word. Let a man, then, receive Jesus Christ as presented in God's word; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as presented in that word, and claim what God has promised in that word. Let him rest upon the assurance that God will do what he promises. That is what Abraham did. He staggered not at the promise, but he believed that what God had promised he was able to perform; and he claimed what God had promised; and in claiming it he got the blessing.

What does Jesus Christ say to you and me?—John vi. 47: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." There is one condition. What is that? That I am to believe on Jesus Christ. And there is one promise, that I am to have eternal life when I do that. Now, there is just one question for me to settle. Do I, deep down in my heart, believe in Jesus Christ, as God's Son and my Savior? I am to settle that question. That is the only question I am to settle. I am as conscious as I am of my existence that I do believe that Jesus is the Christ, that I do believe that Jesus is God's Son and my Savior. I believe that with all my heart. Now, God says if I so believe, I have eternal life. Then, I claim eternal life on God's promise, and claiming it on God's promise I am standing on sure ground.

In addition to that, I know that I have passed from death unto life, because I love the brethren. In addition to that, as a result of that, God's testimony is added to mine that I am his child, and as a result of that knowledge, based on God's word, my heart is glad and it is happy, and, like Job of old, I know that my Redeemer liveth.

Now, as to this precious, blessed assurance, if you were to ask me how I know I am a Christian I would not answer, Because I feel so and so. Some days I feel happy, and some days I don't feel very happy. It is a question of reliance on God's word. It is not a question of feeling.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Hence, the statement, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word"—believeth on me as presented in that word—"hath eternal life." Ah, my friends you don't make enough of your Bible; you don't read your Bible. You hear a sermon and then you go about in a sort of a sentimental kind of groping-around-in-the-dark. Take hold of the promises of God, and remember that faith is not sentimentalism, but it is real, intelligent grasping, taking hold of what God said, and believing he will do what he said, and then claiming what God offers.

The next thing obtained at the feet of Jesus was *rest*—Luke viii. 35: "Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind, and they were afraid."

There was the man that a little while ago dwelt among the tombs, and had no rest day or night; no rest for soul, no rest for mind, no rest for body. And the next time you see him he is sitting at the feet of Jesus, and he is clothed, and he is in his right mind, and he has rest; rest from sin, rest from the demons, rest for the conscience, rest for the soul.

Dear dying sinner, God says there is no rest for you. There is no rest for the wicked. They are like the troubled sea that can not rest. And you know it is so; you have no rest of conscience, no rest of soul, no rest of heart, no rest of assurance, no rest of communion with God, no rest of forgiven sin. Jesus knew that. Hear how tenderly he speaks to you, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls;" the rest of assurance, of sweet communion, of precious fellowship with God, of delightful abiding with Jesus; such rest as John found at the supper leaning there with his head on the bosom of Jesus. That is rest, John at the supper, Mary sitting at his feet, dying Stephen gazing up into heaven. And this rest that God gives his dear children is like the rest of the central sea. The surface is always in commotion, but we are told that in the depths of the central sea there is a quietude that no cyclone ever disturbs. So, thank God, it ought to be with us; on the surface there are a

great many things that create commotion, but standing with both feet on the rock, the word of God, there is peace, there is rest, that this old world can neither give nor take away. Thank God, it is lasting, blessed, eternal.

But I hear some poor, restless, weary, unhappy soul out yonder who is like Noah's dove—on the wing all the time, and with no place to rest the soles of his feet—I hear him say: "Preacher, do you mean to say that what you are talking about now is a realized fact with any body in this vale of tears?" Yes, I mean to say just exactly that. It is a fact, so far as many of these dear saints of God are concerned, and I thank God, if I may tell just a little of my own experience for the Master's glory, it is a fact so far as my own heart is concerned. We ought to tell our experience not boastingly, but in all the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and entice men to seek such a Savior. I gave my heart to God a long time ago. I am sure that God is my Father, that Jesus is my Savior and my Elder Brother, that the Holy Spirit is my Comforter, that the word of God is my guide, that heaven is my home. I am willing to live, ready to die. I am going to heaven when I die. I intend to do all the good I can while I stay here. I do not care much which way it is, how soon I go, nor how long I stay; I have left it all with God. It is joy, happiness, contentment, satisfaction; all is well. I have God's word for it that all things work together for good to them that love God. It is a joy to sing:

"I am happy all day long,
Jesus is my Savior;
And all my life is full of song—
Jesus died for me."

Dear sinner, you do n't know any thing about that. I know you do n't, and that is the reason I tell it to you. Will you come to my Savior? He loves you as well as he loves me, and "I would that my Savior were your Savior too." Will you come and partake of that peace that floweth like a river?

The third thing we get at Jesus' feet is *instruction.* Luke x. 39: "And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word." What did Mary get at the feet of Jesus? Instruction—that good part which should not be taken from her. Ah! that is the place to sit—at the feet of Jesus. It makes a great deal of difference at whose feet we sit. You let a man sit at the feet of John Wesley and he will make a Wesleyite or Methodist out of him; let him sit at the feet of John Calvin and he will make a Calvinist or Presbyterian out of him; let him sit at the feet of Richard Beard and he will make a Beardite or Cumberland Presbyterian out of him; let him sit at the feet of Alexander Campbell and he will make a Campbellite out of him; let him sit at the feet of Joe Smith and he will make a Mormon out of him. Now, barring Joe Smith, these men are a grand heritage of God's church. Peace to their ashes and to their memory.

But, dear friends, do n't make a mistake in stop-

ping there. Let us go on beyond these and get close up to the feet of Jesus. Let us look up into his face and tell him what is in our hearts—our troubles, our joys, and our sorrows. Let us learn of him.

Let me give you from God's word an illustration of the difference between sitting at Jesus' feet and any body else's feet. Do you remember Saul of Tarsus? He sat at the feet of Gamaliel, that learned doctor of the law, and what did Gamaliel make out of Saul of Tarsus? He made the most self-righteous, egotistical, conceited, Pharisaical, ecclesiastical bigot the world ever saw. After a while Saul of Tarsus changed teachers, and he sat at the feet of Jesus; and what did Jesus make out Saul of Tarsus after he had been thus warped and biased by Gamaliel? He made of him, perhaps, the most devoted preacher, the most consecrated evangelist, the most thorough-going saint, the most self-denying missionary, the most Christ-like disciple, and the most willing martyr that the world ever saw. O friends, let us honor good and great men; let us sit at the feet of our pastors and of all who are able to teach us; but over and above and beyond all these, let us come and get down at Jesus' feet.

The next thing that we get at Jesus' feet is the true spirit of *thanksgiving*. Luke xvii. 16: "And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan." There were ten lepers; they had all been blessed by the Lord Jesus, and they all went away without

saying a word of thanksgiving, and one of the ten came back and gave thanks. Why did Jesus have that put in the word? In order to teach us the great duty of thanksgiving, and how acceptable it was unto him.

Friends, one of the greatest defects in our religion to-day is that there is so little of the spirit of true, genuine thanksgiving. We are always on the beg. Lord, give me this; Lord, give me that; Lord, give me this other thing. We get what we ask, and, like the lepers, we go away scarcely ever stopping to give thanks. Practice thanksgiving, if you never tried it. Will you not try it this evening? Get into the closet and lock the door, not that you are ashamed to have any body see you praying, but when I pray in secret I want to be secret. Get down on your knees and spend five minutes in thanksgiving, and nothing but thanksgiving. You will find it a little hard to do, unless you are accustomed to it. Begin to thank God for his grace and love and Spirit and salvation; for the gospel and his word; for civil and religious liberty, and all the ten thousand advantages with which you are blessed; for the glorious hope of immortality. Spend five minutes in that way, and it will take all of the conceit out of you. It will take all of that ecclesiastical starch out of you, and all of that self-righteousness. It will take all feelings of self-sufficiency out of you; all feelings of enmity and animosity out of your heart. And you will not pray very long before your heart will be filled with love and humility, and in the true sense of

the word you will say, I am the least of all the saints of God. Practice it and it will do your heart good. There is nothing that so rejoices the heart of the Lord Jesus as this spirit of thanksgiving.

May I tell you a little incident that occurred in a Western city? Several years ago, while holding a meeting there I was the guest of the Rev. Dr. ——, one of the hardest worked men I ever knew—pastor for over a quarter of a century of a great church. The people of his immense congregation come to talk to him, and the Christian workers come to consult him, and many that are in trouble go to that dear, good man. Young pastors and students go to him for advice, until he is nearly worked to death. In addition to other duties, he publishes a periodical which is read all around the civilized world. Once he had been in his study working all day, from early morning. People had been coming, one wanting this and another something else; each one got what he wanted and left. Away late in the evening there was a gentle tap on the door, and the Doctor laid down his book and said, "Come in." When the door opened it was his own sweet little girl, five or six years old. The Doctor said to her: "Well, Pet, what do you want?" "I don't want any thing, father; I haven't come for any thing; I just feel as if I want to get up in your lap. I want to put both my arms around your neck, and kiss you. Papa, I have just come in to tell you how much I love you." The strong man shook with emotion, and was abso-

lutely overcome. It did his heart good to know that somebody had come to tell him that she loved him; that somebody had come to pour out her heart's affection. And so I imagine it is with the Savior that bought us with his blood and washed us from our sins. Get down at his feet affectionately and lovingly and trustingly; look up in his face and say, "Dear Savior, precious Lord Jesus, I have come to thank you for your truth, for your grace, for your salvation. I haven't come to ask any thing, but to pour out my heart in gratitude and praise and thanksgiving for your matchless grace." Ah, dear saint, that is the holy perfume, the holy incense that goes up to God in heaven. I am ashamed of my base, black ingratitude. Let us have more of the spirit of thanksgiving.

Another thing we get at Jesus' feet, is the spirit of *intercession.* Mark vii. 25: "For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him and came and fell at his feet." What did that poor Syrophœnician woman get at the feet of Jesus? She got the spirit of true, genuine intercession. She came there and she interceded for her child until she obtained a blessing. What a lesson is here for you Christian mothers. What a lesson is here for you Christian wives who have husbands and children that are out of Christ. Did you spend some time this morning interceding at the feet of Jesus for them? I am afraid that some of you have not done much interceding today for any body. Dear Christians, saints of God,

we must intercede. God delights to give ear to the importunate prayer. You who can not give up your dear ones, intercede and continue to intercede.

Several years ago I was holding a meeting in Illinois, and one morning I had a little thanksgiving service. One lady said: "I want to thank God for the conversion of my husband last night. Three times a day for twenty-one years I prayed for that husband, and last night he was converted here in the meeting." You can't give up this intercession; you can't afford to do it.

Let me tell you a true story about a mother interceding for her child. In Texas there lived for thirty-five or forty years a Rev. Dr. ——. He married a widow who had a godless son, and in the course of a number of years this son grew up to be very wicked and abandoned. Dr. —— died, and a few years after his death the woman died. There are people living there now who told me the facts. Just before the mother died she called her friends around her and said: "I am going to die. My boy is godless, profane, and a drunkard. But I have interceded with the Master for him, and I have pleaded with the God of the covenant, and he has given me the assurance that he is going to save my boy." That was a number of years ago. About three years ago I was there in that town holding a meeting, and we were having a gracious time. We had gone to the Opera House to have a room large enough. One Saturday morning

among others converted was this very man, then grown to be old. He was sitting in the back part of the Opera House, and my wife was by him reading him some passages from the word. His heart received the scripture, and he came to Christ.

That Saturday morning he walked forward and came to the rail and said: "Thank God a mother's prayers are answered, and I am saved." It looked as if heaven and earth were coming together that morning. There were those who remembered that dying mother, and the words she uttered on her death bed, and I think if the saints in heaven ever do look over the battlements of glory, they looked over that morning. And I was there some time after that to help raise some money for the Young Men's Christian Association, and that man sat on the platform a godly, consecrated man. Mothers, have faith in the covenant, and intercede earnestly with the Lord Jesus Christ for your children.

The next thing we get at Jesus' feet is *consolation*. Mark v. 22: "And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and when he saw him he fell at his feet." What did Jairus get at Jesus' feet? He obtained consolation. This man's daughter was afflicted, yea, even unto death, and the poor man's heart was bleeding, aching, lacerated. Where did he go? He didn't go and get drunk. He didn't go off to infidelity nor to agnosticism. He went to Jesus and fell down at his feet, and, thank God, he obtained

consolation. Christ restored unto him his daughter.

Just so it is with us, my friends. Suffering and sorrow are the lot of humanity. I look around here to-day, and every day, and I see crape here and there and yonder. I know what that means; it means sorrow and grief; it means that the water and the billows have rolled deep over your soul. Sorrowing one, let me say to you: Look to the Lord Jesus, put your faith in him, and thank God

"Earth hath no sorrow that Heaven can not heal."

And thank God, in the Lord Jesus Christ there is consolation for every suffering, sad, aching heart this morning. God may have taken your little one. If he did, it was right. The Judge of all the earth will do right. Perhaps he wanted to transplant that little bud close up yonder by the throne in that paradise of God, where the frost of sin will never nip it. Perhaps he took a dear one; God knows best. Leave it with him; I care not how deep the sorrow is, submit it all to Jesus. You never endured such sorrow as he did. Put it all in his hand; trust him sweetly, and he will fill your heart with joy. As you look through the tear drops that roll down from your eyes there will be the rainbow of light and love and joy.

Lastly, we get at Jesus' feet the spirit and life of true, genuine *worship*. Matthew xxviii. 9: "And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet and worshiped him." They wor-

shiped at the feet of Jesus; not on the rugged heights of philosophy; not in the depths of science and geology. You may dig there for some things, but you will never find the spirit of worship by digging there. Not on the cold, icy plains of stoicism, but at the feet of Jesus they obtained the spirit of worship, the right of worship, the privilege of worship, and the benefits of worship. Ah, friends, the place to worship God is at the feet of God's Son.

There is something about that verse I want to explain. You know you read over there in another place where Christ said to the woman, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father," and here he lets them come and embrace him by the feet; and some people have been very much confused and troubled as to why Jesus did let Mary touch him at one time and forbade it at another. What is the explanation? He had not yet ascended to his Father. Let us not try to throw any of our moonshine on this; let us let God's sunlight interpret his sunlight. In Leviticus you will find that when the high-priest had offered an atoning sacrifice, no mortal could touch him until he had gone into the holy of holies and presented that blood to Almighty God there in the presence of the divine Shekinah. Now, to-day Jesus Christ is the high-priest and atoning Lamb of God; and after he offered that atoning sacrifice on the cross, and after it had been accepted by his being raised from the dead, before mortal man could touch him, he must ascend to the holy of holies above, and pre-

sent that atoning blood to Almighty God in the *sanctum sanctorum* of that temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Then he descended again and gave his final instructions, and in due time took his formal and final ascent from the Mount of Olives.

CHRIST AND BELIEVERS.

THE topic this morning is, "Christ and Believers;" the text, John ii. 25, 26: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

I am not going to talk about the resurrection. That is one thing taught in the text, and I sometimes give a Bible reading on the resurrection; but the great thought in this verse, to my mind, is the connection between Christ and those that believe in Christ. Have we life? It is because the life is in Christ. Have we salvation? It is because of the salvation there is in Jesus Christ. Therefore our life, our salvation, our hope, our joy, our future, our glory, our peace, our immortality—all are wrapped up in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, the apostle says that "Christ is all, and in all," and Christ himself says, "I am Alpha and Omega"—that is, the beginning, the middle, and the end. All that is included in the text.

So I want to talk to you this morning about

Christ and believers. And let me say, friends, one reason the majority of Christians do not live up to their responsibility is that they have never taken in from God's word the sense of what their responsibilities as Christians are; the reason they do not live up to their privileges is that they have never comprehended from God's word what their privileges in Christ are. The reason many of us are living down on a low plane at this poor, dying, miserable rate is that we have never understood all there is for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. I hope as we study God's blessed word we will take in the thought of the responsibility, the privilege, the honor, the glory, there is in being a believer in Jesus Christ.

I am going to give you six verses of Scripture to be read, each one of which presents a specific and distinct responsibility, obligation, or privilege of a believer.

The first one is that we are *witnesses* for Christ. Hear the word, Acts i. 8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

There is a distinct obligation and responsibility resting upon us as Christians, as believers in Christ. We are to testify on the great witness stand before a lost world; to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. Will you accept the high honor that there is in that place? I imagine Gabriel would leap clear over the battlements

of glory for the privilege of coming down here and walking these streets and telling poor souls about Jesus. But God has never given him that honor. He conferred great honor upon an angel when he sent Michael to guard the body of Moses when the devil was contending for it. He sent another angel down here to take Lazarus to Abraham's bosom when he was dying, and he sent Gabriel here to carry a special message to Daniel. But he has never sent one of his angels into the midst of guilty, lost sinners, to tell about the cross of the Lord Jesus, to tell about the love of God shed abroad in the heart, to be a witness of the saving power of the Son of God. That is an honor God has conferred exclusively upon redeemed saints, exclusively upon sinners saved by grace. O Christians, when I think how Gabriel and Michael and those tall archangels would rejoice at this privilege, I am struck with amazement when I see so many Christians reluctant, shirking, trying to get out of saying a word for Jesus. O you have never understood the high honor that God has conferred upon you. Not only is it an honor but it is a blessed privilege. It is a privilege to tell of such a benefactor as Jesus, of such a Savior, of the love he has—to talk about such a Friend. I love to tell about Christ; I love to preach the gospel; I love to proclaim these glorious things of the Son of God.

Some people think it is not much honor or privilege to be a preacher. I don't know what you think about it, but I would not exchange

places with Cleveland and Harrison both in one. God's faithful witnesses have honor, distinction, privilege, glory that Gabriel never had, much less senators and presidents. And, thank God, this is your privilege, the privilege of every one here. Not perhaps as an evangelist, not perhaps as an ordained preacher, but as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, like the woman at Jacob's well in Samaria, it is your privilege to speak out your own testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. And friends, think again about how short the time will be. It will not be long that you will have the privilege of standing with the word of the Savior in your hands, and telling lost, blind, ignorant sinners about Jesus and his love—about his grace and his glory, his peace communion and sweet fellowship. That will all soon be over, and you will go to your Father.

There are a great many privileges and glories in heaven, but there is one you have here that you will not have there, the privilege of telling lost sinners about Christ, of winning a soul to Jesus. One of the strongest ties that hold me to this world is this: that it is only in this world that I will ever be able to tell about my Master and win souls thereby to the Lord. High, precious, blessed, glorious privilege!

And now I ask you, dear saints, can you have the love of God shed abroad in your hearts, and live in the midst of unsaved people without a word of testimony? Perhaps your wife is not a Christian? Have you said any thing to her about

Jesus? Perhaps your daughters are not Christians. Have you spoken a word for Jesus to them? Perhaps the clerk in your store is not a Christian. Have you said to him a word for Jesus? Perhaps your partner in business is unsaved. Have you given out any testimony for Jesus? O dear dying man, if you have not, you are recreant to the high trust that Jesus Christ committed to you when he said, "Ye shall be witnesses for me."

But I hear somebody say, "How are we to witness?" You are to witness in all the relations of life in which you are thrown with your fellowmen. Are you a wife; are you a house-keeper; are you a mother? You are so to act as to honor Christ as a wife, and as a mother; you are to keep your house, control your children, regulate your domestic duties, and govern your servants in every way so as in the doing of it the Lord Jesus will be honored in you as one of his saints. That is your high mission. Are you a man? Are you in business? Then it is your duty to take your religion into your business; it is your duty in your business to testify for Jesus. Are you a lawyer? Then deal with your client, and with the jury, with the law, with the facts, as Jesus would if he were pleading that case here in court. When you do that you will not be driving away a bad witness to keep from losing a case. Are you a doctor? Then practice medicine as you believe Jesus Christ would; and if you do that you will not come to those patients that are just a little

sick and then give them a lot of medicine to make them so sick as to give you an excuse for giving them a great deal more and making a large bill. Are you a merchant? Then have a yard-stick exactly thirty-six inches long, and have a weight that weighs exactly sixteen ounces to the pound; do not sell any tainted meat if you are a butcher; or, if you are a grocer, do not put any pebbles in the coffee.

To be a Christian is, in all the relations of life, to duplicate the life of Jesus Christ. Let us show by our conduct and conversation that the religion of Christ will make us better men and women, better husbands and wives, better fathers and mothers, better lawyers, better doctors, better physicians, better merchants, better citizens. That is what Christianity ought to be; and the great high mission that you have in this world, is to testify to the world, and then prove your testimony by your life, showing what Christianity will do for a man.

Again you can testify for Christ by never having "the blues," or being melancholy and downcast. I have very little patience with people who claim to be God's children, saved by grace, and then go on and look as solemn as if they had been dead a week. We ought to make the impression on this world that our hearts are glad, that our souls are happy, and that we rejoice in God our Savior. We ought to make our religion so attractive that the poor, dying sinner, when he sees us, will feel that we have something that

he has not—something better than he has known. That is our privilege and that is our duty—to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you may notice another thing, the universality, the perpetualness of this witnessing both as to time and place. What did he say? "At Jerusalem"—that meant home; "in Samaria"—that was the adjoining county or state; "and in all Judea"—that was the surrounding country; "and to the uttermost part of the earth"—that is, everywhere. At all times and places we are to witness for Jesus Christ.

But there are some people in this city that forget this. Here is a faithful Sunday-school worker. He goes down to attend the World's Exposition at New Orleans, and on Sunday visits Eads' jetties on an excursion. He would n't do that at home, and yet Jesus is down there at Eads' jetties, and this Sunday-school teacher knows it. You good elders and deacons will not go to the theater or circus here at home, perhaps, and there are a great many other things you would not do here; but you go up yonder to New York to buy goods, and you will go to the theaters and circuses there, and to many other places; and you will feel, "I am on a kind of a religious furlough, and nobody sees me nor knows me, and I will not compromise my influence." The Lord Jesus Christ is there; he will see you and he knows.

Let us then at all times and in all places be out and out witnesses for the Lord Jesus

Christ. Do you know why some of you do not enjoy religion any more than you do? You will not testify for Christ. He has put you on the witness stand and you refuse to testify. What does the court do with a witness that will not testify? He is sent to jail for contempt of court till he will give his testimony. And some of you are shut up to-day in Doubting Castle; you are as cold as an iceberg, and as dead as an Egyptian mummy, because you will not speak out for Jesus.

Let us come out and testify for our Lord. It is a precious, glorious, blessed privilege. But do you know what a great many church members do? Instead of testifying *for* Jesus, they testify *against* him. I will give you an illustration. Suppose there are here two hotels; both tolerably good hotels. Here is a traveling man, we will say. He comes and puts up at one of the hotels and stays there four or five months, and every body in town finds out that he stays at that hotel. After a while he goes and stays at the other, and a friend meets him on the street and says, "Why, John, I thought you were staying at Mr. A's hotel." "Yes, so I was." "Why did you change?" "I didn't like the bill of fare over there; this bill of fare is a great deal more palatable." What is he doing? Testifying against the first hotel, and for the second. Now God's church may be called the gospel inn—the gospel hotel; when you are converted and join the church, you put up at the gospel inn. And

there is the bill of fare, the bread of life, the water of life, the wine of gladness, and the communion of life. The devil has a hotel too, with a monstrously long bill of fare; whisky, and cards, and hops, and balls, and deception, and profanity, and circuses, and shows, and five thousand other things too numerous to mention. But you have gone to the church, to this gospel inn, attended the church right well for a little while, and after a while you drop off, quit going to church, are hardly ever seen there, are never seen at the communion table. You have quit all that. You are never seen at the prayer-meeting, and hardly ever at the Sabbath morning service unless the day is exceedingly pleasant. Where else are you seen? In the devil's hotel, drinking whisky, playing cards, dancing and carousing and buying lottery tickets and betting on horse-races. The sinner concludes—what? That you like the bill of fare at the devil's hotel better than at God's hotel; that you like the world better than the church; and you are virtually saying, "I have tried the bread of life, and it was dry living; I have tried the water of life, it is not strong enough; I have tried communion and fellowship with the saints; there is not much in it. If you want to have a good time and enjoy yourself and live high and fare sumptuously every day, and, I might add, go to hell at last, go and put up at the devil's hotel, and you will have a good time." That is what you are doing, testifying against Christ, many of you. Hence, Christ says

to this class exactly, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."

Another privilege which devolves upon us by virtue of our being Christians is that we are God's *epistles*. 2 Cor. iii. 3: "For as much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone but in fleshly tables of the heart."

We are "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God:" therefore Christians are called the epistles of the Lord. What about an epistle? In the first place it ought to be legible, and if God wrote it it is legible. In the second place it ought to be readable. But I hear somebody say, "If it is legible, I guess it is readable." Not every time. What is printed and written in the book which I hold up before you is legible, and it is now also readable. But suppose I lay it down there, and throw open all these windows, and leave open these doors, and there comes one of the long, dry, dusty spells which you sometimes have here. You may let the dust settle on the open page until it gets so thick that the printed words, though still legible, though not blotted out, are no longer readable, because you can't see them. That is about the condition of a great many people who are church members. We will grant that they are born of God, and that the writing on their hearts is legible; but they have aired themselves around here in Vanity Fair, and have dusted around with the devil's disciples, until they are

covered so thick with the dust of the world and worldly-mindedness and conformity, that when you see them you don't read the words of Jesus or recognize the spirit of Christ. Dear saints of God, let us not only be legible, but readable epistles; and if the dust of the world is settling upon us let us take the dust-brush of prayer and the water of the word, and let us cleanse ourselves from this dust, and become once more such epistles of the Lord Jesus that all who see us will read Christ. Do you know how it was with the early disciples, Peter, James, and John? When the people saw them they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. I will tell you, friends, if you live close to Christ, if you live in communion and fellowship with him; if you follow his example, you will manifest the spirit of Christ, and you will have the mind and image of Christ, and all who see you and come in contact with you will know that you have been with Jesus. Christians, here is our privilege: to live so close to Christ, and in such communion with him, that when men read us they will read the love of Jesus, the spirit, the meekness, the humility, the consecration, the self-denial, and the devotion of Jesus. In other words, when they look into our hearts, lives, and conduct they will see the image of the Lord Jesus. O Christian, that is an honor worthy of the aspiration of a saint and an immortal soul.

Our next high privilege and obligation grow out of the truth that we are *crucified* with Christ.

Gal. vi. 14: "But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

You are all familiar with the first part of that verse, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross." We all say that. Did you notice the last part, "by whom?" That is, "by the cross on which Christ was crucified ye are crucified unto the world, and by this cross the world is crucified to you." That is the idea.

Now, let us speak a little about the Bible idea of the cross. A great many people have a very mistaken idea about the cross. You all hear men talk this way: "O I have taken up my cross. I began to ask a blessing at my table, I have family prayers, I pray in public, I am beginning to teach a Sunday-school class." God bless your soul, that is not the Bible idea of the cross at all. Those things are duties, those things are simple service; they are not the cross.

Again, the word "cross" in the Bible, in neither the English, Greek, or Hebrew, is ever used in the plural number. You can't find the word "crosses" in the book of God. It is one cross, *the* cross on which Christ suffered, as an outcast, the ignominious death. Hence, the words, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."

What was Christ on the cross? What was his

position? A position of rejection by the world, of isolation from the world, of odium and contempt. In addition to that it was a position of dying and of death to the world, a position in which he became dead to the world. Then, the Bible idea of the cross is this: To take a stand of isolation, of rejection; to be willing to be derided, sneered at, scoffed at, ridiculed for being identified with Jesus; to take a position right side by side with him; to become dead to the world as he was, while the world is dead to you as it was to him. That is the Bible idea of the cross. And right there comes the tug of war in the Christian life in our day. Are you willing to be regarded by this little, light-headed, silly, empty, farcical society as a crank, as a fanatic, as a fool? Are you willing to be thought a straight-laced extremist, because of your identification with the Lord Jesus? Are you? That is the cross. Are you willing to get right up there by the side of Christ and bear that? That, my dear friends, is the Bible idea of the cross. Isolation and insulation with the Lord Jesus Christ. You will have to attain to this if you are going to be useful; if you are going to be worth any thing in the house and in the vineyard of God.

Let me illustrate: I notice your telegraph wires have a pole, and then you have a stick away up there nailed on to the end of the pole, and then you have a piece of glass fitting right down on the end of the stick. They say they want to have the wire insulated and isolated. Why? In

order that the electric current may flow through the wire without being hindered by the stick or the pole or the ground. Now, let there come a storm and break the wires down from that position of insulation and isolation, and get it down in the mud and sand; the electric current will not pass through that wire, because it is not in its proper position. It is not isolated and insulated. Just so with the saints of God. They are to take a stand up here on the cross with Jesus Christ, and they are to be so identified with him that the curse of worldliness is cut off from them, and also in order that the divine current of the light and love of the Holy Ghost may flow through them, and shed the light and glory of God down upon a dark world. That is why Christ says, "If any man will be my disciple let him deny himself and take up the cross." He does not say "Simply pray in public, or teach in the Sunday-school," but, "Get up here beside me, and let the world alone, be dead to the world, and let the world be dead to you." Do you take church members and Christians down from that exalted position in connection with Jesus Christ, and mix them up and stir them up with a lot of godless hops and progressive euchre parties, with worldliness and Sunday desecration, and expect the divine current to flow through them? No, no. Do you expect the Holy Ghost to move through them and win souls to Jesus? Are you looking for the light from God's throne to shine through them upon a lost world? No, sir. It is as unscientific, as un-

philosophic, as absurd as it would be to expect that telegraph wire down there in the mud and sand, and brick and dirt, and trash and weeds, to transmit the electric current. The thing can not be done. God knew that, and therefore he said, "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate." God knew that, and hence he said to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."

Saints of God, I ask you, will you give up this high honor, this privilege and glory, for the poor, miserable mess of pottage that you get by your worldliness, and worldly-mindedness, and worldly conformity? Will you do it? I would not sell such a birthright at such a miserable price. Talk to me about your vain and hollow, worldly society! There is nothing in it. It is empty, cold, and dead; and, as Solomon, who tried it, said, "vanity and vexation of spirit."

I agree with Thomas Carlyle in one thing especially: I do despise a sham and a fraud; and I tell you we have one miserable sham in this country—people saying they are crucified with Christ, that they are God's saints, dead to the world, and the world dead to them, while they are mixing and mingling with the world in every thing just as if they did not pretend to be Christians. It is a sham and a fraud.

Suppose I have a man here dead, physically. I stretch him out here on this platform, turn him over on his back, put his hands across his bosom,

close his eyes. He is dead. Now, start a little godless hop, begin to play the violin; start a little progressive euchre party, open a whisky shop, get up a little poker party, a whist party, a horse-race, build a gambling saloon, a theater, or start a circus, with its clown ridiculing the Bible. Now, I submit that if when the violin begins to play he begins to shake his foot he is not dead; if, when the glasses begin to rattle in that saloon and the money to clink in that gambling den, he begins to crawl off the platform and starts to join in the game of poker he is not dead. Dead men don't play poker, nor crawl, nor walk. See what a farce it would be to call him a dead man. He is not dead. Now, let me ask, what is it for a man to be dead with Christ? His life is hid with Christ in God. What is it to be crucified with Christ? It is to be put there on that cross, and to be so thoroughly identified with Christ that we are as dead to those things spiritually as is the man in his grave to them physically? Here is a man who says: "Yes, I am dead to the world; I am one of God's saints; I am crucified with the Lord Jesus; I am dead with Christ, and my life is hid with Christ in God." Every time there comes a little circus he crawls off the stage and goes into the circus. He crawls down off the cross and goes down to the gambling den. Is he dead and crucified with Christ? No, sir; it is a farce, a sham to say that he is. May God help us to take our places by the side of Jesus Christ and show by our lives that we are dead to these things, and that they are dead to us.

Another thing is that we are *heirs* of God and *joint heirs* with Jesus Christ. Rom. viii. 17: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Hence that wonderful inventory that Paul took of a saint's possessions: "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." How great is the honor, the distinction, and the glory of being an heir of God; an heir of what God is, and also an heir of what God has; an heir of what God can create, and of what God can give. Talk about distinction, talk about your aristocracy, your blue blood, and your "first families of Virginia." I do n't know whether my blood is very blue or not, and I care just about as little as I know. I care as little about earthly aristocracy. I want to be akin to the Lord Jesus, an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ; an heir of heaven and bliss and immortality. I want to belong to the first families of the skies, the first families of heaven, the first families of glory, and bliss, and immortality.

"Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Talk about your Goulds and Vanderbilts, but here is more than a millionaire—the man that is an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus. As I think of that beautiful heaven, with its streets of gold, and down the midst flowing the river of the water of life, and on either bank the trees, I thank God this heaven is my heaven, for it is my Father's heaven; that river is my river, and those trees are my trees, for they are my Father's.

As I heard a good man say the other day, who had a darling little child: "Little darling, all that I have here is yours; and then mamma and papa are yours, too." And that is about my idea of heaven. These things are all mine, because God is mine and Christ is mine. Thank God, I am an heir of the glorious bliss in heaven. Dear friend, be an heir of God, of heaven and immortality. How precious and blessed that is. And as we, like Moses, look away by faith, how little do we care for this old world and all there is in it!

That is glorious and blessed, but now let us be a little practical. There are two sides to this question. We need practical preaching as well as preaching that makes us glad and happy. We are not only heirs of Christ up yonder, but we are heirs of Christ down here. Did the world hate Christ? You are an heir of that same hatred. He said they would hate you also. Did the world reproach Christ? It will reproach you. Did the world think Christ beside himself? It will think you are beside yourself. Did the world sneer and revile and persecute him? It will also revile and persecute you. You are heirs of his reproach, of his contempt, of his hatred, of his persecution, and they will heap all these things upon you as certainly as God lives. The days of persecution are not past. The stake is past, Smithfield is past; but what have we to-day? It is a kind of subtle, refined, dainty, disguised persecution.

For instance, you let a young lady come and accept Christ and take a bold stand for him—a young

lady that has heretofore been going into what is called society. How long will it be until you hear the young men and the young women saying, "O she is a wall-flower; she is left; she is a stick." That is one of their set phrases. "She is an old maid." Then they will begin to snub her at their little social gatherings and parties. I know one of the first young ladies of an adjoining State who had just that experience in the best city in that State.

And here is a young man that will not live as he has been living before. What do the boys say? "Dick is going to join the presbytery, going to conference;" and they begin to call him "Parson." What does all that mean? It is the same godless old world that persecuted Jesus persecuting those that follow Jesus. What does the Book say? "He that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

But I hear somebody say, "I have been in the church a long time, and nobody has ever persecuted me." And do you know why? Your poor, lazy, trifling soul has never done enough to make the devil mad enough to want to persecute you. The devil never persecutes "dead-heads," or those people who are doing nothing.

Did you ever hear of that incident of the man going along the road and seeing one puny little devil sitting upon the fence watching one man, and going down the road a little piece farther there sat a half a dozen watching another man? Said he to them, "Why are there half a dozen here watching

this man, while that man there has just one watching him?" "Why, the man you saw first is one of the worst men in the country. He is going right down to hell, and one little devil can keep him in the broad road. But here is a man trying to serve God and do something, trying to be an earnest, consecrated Christian, and it will keep six of us busy to prevent him from succeeding." If you have never been persecuted it is because you have never done any thing for Christ, and after a while you will be spewed out of his mouth, for you are neither hot nor cold. Come out and show your colors and take your stand; have some moral backbone in you; stand as unswervingly as Jesus Christ and Daniel and Isaiah and Jeremiah stood. And so certain as you do this you will meet persecution.

Are you willing to endure these things down here in order that you may enjoy the glorious things up yonder? When I think of the glory of my Lord, and of that glorious immortality that awaits me, and when I think I am going to see Jesus—God says I am—and that I shall be like him, and that this mortal body will be changed into the image of his glorious body, I look down with royal contempt upon the graceless, godless world that wants to sneer and scoff at religion in me. What do I care for those things? I have drawn the sword and thrown the scabbard away; I am for God and heaven and immortality. Let the world say and do as it will. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

When you get above this world and stand, as Joshua stood above the kings of Canaan, with your foot right down on its neck, then you will be glad and happy, then you can go on your way rejoicing. Yonder is Peter, following afar off; here is John, clinging close to Jesus. It was Peter that denied him; it was not John. It is a dangerous thing to follow the Lord afar off. Get up close to him. Lay your head on his bosom, as John did; cling lovingly to him, and you will miss half the temptations that you would otherwise come in contact with.

Again, we will be *like Jesus*. 1 John iii. 2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

We are going to be like Jesus. Let these scientists cavil as much as they please about the resurrection. God says it is going to be, and he says these bodies shall be like the glorious body of the Son of God. I wish I could have seen him as he stood on the mount of transfiguration. But, thank God, I will see him, and, thank God, I shall be like him, and so will every true son of God.

I will tell you what this State, as well as these United States, needs. It needs more men and women that are like Jesus here, in the midst of sin and temptation; like Jesus now. We have enough of this thought that we are going to be like him over yonder. We want a little more of this divine likeness down here. May God help us from this

day forward to be like Jesus here, now, in the family circle, in the social circle, in business; like him in love, in humility, in consecration, in fidelity, in devotion to God's word and to God's will. Dear saints, let me say: If you are like Jesus here, you can go on your way rejoicing. There is no question about your being like him over yonder.

We now come to the last thought in this discourse. It is that we are to *live with Jesus.* John xiv. 2, 3: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

We are going to be with Jesus, to live with him. Hear what he says: "I go to prepare a place for you." He has been preparing that place ever since the day of his ascension, and after a while he will get the house, that bridal chamber, ready; and when it is finished he will come again, and what will he do? "I will receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

We have a home beyond the skies, above the sun, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where, with our Lord and Redeemer, we shall spend a blissful, glorious eternity. Let us live with him while we are down here on earth. Some people have an idea they are to be converted and never be with Jesus any more till they get to heaven. I thank God that is not my experience. A long time ago I laid my faith on him, and from that dav to this, "All the way long it has been Jesus."

EFFECTUAL PRAYER.

THE theme this morning is the "Conditions of Effectual Prayer." The text is, James v. 16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

I want you to notice the context. Who was the person praying? It was Elias. Did you ever notice what he was praying for? It was for rain, about the weather. A great many people think it is perfectly fanatical and unscientific and absurd for any body to talk about praying for rain. But hear what God says about it: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth for a space of three years and six months." That is pretty good authority for praying about the weather. "And he prayed again"—he is going to pray in the opposite direction now—"and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." Now, let your scientific men, who reject our God and his providence and his work, repudiate the idea of praying for rain, if they choose, but as long as I have God's word and Elijah's example, as long as the fact remains that God heard Elijah when he prayed for dearth and when he

prayed for rain, I am going to pray for whatever I need. The world wants to get rid of God in more ways than one.

Now, what is the truth about it? God has subjected the world and matter to the reign of law, or to the ordinary course of nature, if you will call it that. That is very true; but God has not so subjected it to those laws that he can not interfere when he pleases and control it as he wants to.

The hands of that clock are subjected to a certain law. They run around in accordance with that law. But I could take a step-ladder and get up there and turn them around the other way. So God can make the earth go one way, and he can turn it around and make it go the other way. He did so on one occasion long enough for Joshua to overcome God's enemies. Just so with rain. Rain comes and goes according to determined law. But when God wants to interfere and suspend those laws and suspend the rain he can do it, as he did in the days of Elijah; and when he wants to produce a great flood, as he did in the days of Noah, he can do it.

Whenever you talk about praying, and the philosophy of prayer, and the science of prayer, and the tests of prayer, and all of that kind of thing, I answer: I do n't know much about the science of it, and I care as little as I know. I know very little about the philosophy of it, and care as little. Here is the way I look at it: God is our Father, and we are his children. We come and ask him for the things that we need, and he hears us

and answers us; and that is science and philosophy enough for me.

To illustrate: Here is a little child and his father on a cold winter day. That little boy needs shoes, he needs a thicker coat, a new hat, and gloves. He comes to his father and says: "My old shoes are almost worn out, my feet are cold. Father, will you give me some new shoes? My coat is out at the elbows, and ragged, and will not keep me warm. Get me a new coat, please. And my hat has holes in it. I wish you would give me a new hat. My fingers are sticking out of my old gloves. Please get me a new pair. And I am hungry this morning. Will you give me some bread?" As certain as that is a father, and as certain as that is his child, he will give that darling little one what he needs. So the little boy eats his breakfast and gets his new coat and shoes and hat and gloves and away he goes to school, with a glad and happy heart. That is science enough and philosophy enough for him. And, thank God, that is a picture of the heavenly Father's dealings with us who need grace and love and intelligence and wisdom and help and strength. I go to my Father and I ask him for the things I need, and, thank God, I know that he gives them. I know that he hears me. That is science enough for me, and that is philosophy enough. Let these agnostics, who, according to their own profession, know neither our God nor any thing else in spiritual things, go on; but we will pray and rejoice in our Father who hears and answers prayer.

But I want to talk especially to you that are Christians on the conditions of effectual prayer. Now, God hears prayer, but, mark it, he hears prayer on conditions. Some people think, "It does not make any difference about conditions. Just pray, pray at random; pray about any thing; pray in any sort of a way. Of course God hears prayer, and if you pray to God he will hear you." He will not do it. There are conditions upon which he will hear your prayer, and these conditions are laid down in God's word, and if you are going to pray an effectual prayer you must abide by these conditions. Does God save men? Yes, but he does not save them except on conditions. No man is saved unless he complies with the conditions. Just so, are you going to pray an effectual prayer? You must abide by God's conditions.

Now, what are the conditions? I shall not give you all of them, but I shall give you about seven. I am going to let the Bible do its own preaching. I shall give you seven verses of scripture, each one of which lays down a specific condition upon which God promises to hear our prayer.

The first condition of effectual prayer is *fellowship*. Hear the word: John xv. 7: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you." Do you not see that fellowship is the idea? Abiding in Christ means fellowship with Christ, and abiding in the word means fellowship with the word. Therefore Christ says:

"If ye are in fellowship with me and with my

word, ye may ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."

Now, I hear some shrewd caviler back yonder make this remark: "If that is so, then is n't that giving unbridled liberty to the human will?" No, sir, not at all. I imagine I hear that man saying, "If a man has the promise of getting any thing he asks for, he may ask for the death of an enemy; he may ask for some great calamity to come on those he hates; he may ask for a great many absurd and ridiculous things." But if a man is abiding in Christ, is in fellowship with Christ, and in fellowship with God's word, he will not have a will that will prompt him to ask these things. He will have a will in fellowship with Christ's will, and with God's word, and that will always regulate the prayer. He will pray in accordance with the will of the Master, and, God's word for it, he shall have what he asks for.

Abiding in Christ—what do we mean by it? Let scripture interpret and explain scripture. Read all of that fifteenth chapter of John, and especially that first part. You will hear Jesus say, "I am the vine; ye are the branches." Here is a little vine and a little branch—the branch abiding in the vine. What does that mean? It means that the branch is every day and every hour drawing life, nutriment, and the power of fruit-bearing from that vine—with which it has a living, veritable union.

What is it to abide in Christ, morally, spiritually? He is the vine. Each individual is a branch in Christ. Therefore, the gospel idea is

that every day and every hour we are to be drawing light and life, strength and power, or—if I may carry out the figure—spiritual sap and the fruit-bearing element, from this great vine, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But, mark it, if we do that we have to be new creatures in Christ Jesus. If we do that we must have more than a mere nominal connection with God's church. We must have a veritable, actual union with the Lord Jesus Christ; a heart and soul union, an abiding, spiritual union. That is what it is to abide in Christ.

Now, do you not see, if you do that, Christ's fruits will inevitably follow? Here is the vine and the branch abiding in the vine. Now, what is the one great concern of that branch? It is not to be worrying itself about how much fruit it is going to bear, or what sort of fruit. Its one great concern is to keep in communion with the vine, to abide in the vine. If it does that, the fruit will take care of itself.

Just so with the Christian. Don't be bothering yourself so much about your creeds and your dogmas and your theological abstractions, your metaphysics and all of that. Maintain a heart-felt, a deep, soul-felt, spiritual union, communion, and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, day in and day out, month in and month out. Your life will take care of itself. Your fruit will take care of itself. Your joy, your peace, your growth in grace will take care of itself. That is a mistaken idea, Christian, that you are always to be searching and

watching, stopping and looking inward to keep yourself in just such a frame of mind. Keep yourself in Christ; watch that you stay in communion with Christ; watch that you keep close to his bleeding side, and all these other things will take care of themselves. That is what it is to abide in Christ.

What is it to abide in the word? "Ye abide in me, and my words abide in you." Mark it, we are to be in Christ, and the word is to be in us. What is it to have the word abide in us? It is two things. It is, first, to have the word abide in our heart, to have God's word well stored away in our memory. Now, let me suggest a good rule for you. Every morning as you get up, as soon as you get out of bed, go to your Bible and read a verse over, and begin to repeat it until you have memorized it. Keep that up for a year and you will know three hundred and sixty-five verses of scripture. If we leave out these preachers, I doubt if there are three Christians in town that can repeat three hundred and sixty-five verses of scripture this morning. Get your mind well stored with God's promises. If you do that, it will help you out of many of the difficulties that you will get into as you go along in your Christian life.

I will give you an illustration. Mary sat at the empty grave of Jesus, and she wept; and when she was asked the question why she wept, she said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She was troubled because Jesus was not in the grave. What did the

angel say to her? Mark it, he had been listening to what Jesus had said a long time before. "Wist ye not, remember ye not his word, how he spoke in Galilee, that he would rise again on the third day?" Just as soon as Mary remembered the words of Jesus, that he said he would rise the third day, the whole trouble vanished; the tears were gone, and I have no doubt she thanked God that Jesus was not in the grave. In the same way you frequently get into temptation, into Doubting Castle, or into some terrible trial—all just because you have forgotten some promise, some word of the Lord.

Have your mind well stored with God's word to help you in your praying. The best way in the world to pray is not with a prayer-book, though that is a very good way, perhaps, but with God's book. I mean that when you go to pray you want some specific promise that points to the thing that you ask for. You plead that specific promise. I would rather plead one specific promise of Almighty God for five minutes than pray five hours without such a promise. If I may use a commercial phrase, God will never repudiate his own paper. The promises are God's notes of hand; his blank checks that you are simply to fill out. God will never repudiate his paper. Get some specific promise and plead that.

May I give you just one illustration? Here is a promise very precious, especially to preachers: "Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel," says Jesus, "and lo, I am with you alway, even

unto the end of the world." The minister goes to a strange place. I come in here some night, and here are one thousand, twelve hundred, fifteen hundred people, good, bad, indifferent — drawn hither by curiosity — all eyes, ears, and expectation. Perhaps nine tenths of the audience have come out of mere idle curiosity. If you have never tried it, you do not know what it is to go before such an audience as that and preach the gospel. Before facing such a multitude, it gives the preacher comfort and strength to get down upon his knees and plead that promise of the Savior: "Dear Lord, thou didst tell me to go and preach the gospel to these people; thou knowest what is sufficient for me; thou didst say, I will go with you. Dear Savior, I claim that promise to-night. Go with me to-night; give me grace and courage and love; give me the Holy Ghost. Help me to preach to-night; be with me, in my heart, cheering, comforting, strengthening, guiding."

Again, here is a promise that will apply to all of us, whether we preach or not. God says, "I will help you." Are you in any strait, in any trial, in any place where you need help? Go to your closet and get down upon your knees and say, "Father, I am thy child; Father, thou didst say, I will help thee. Father, I need thy help here and now, help in this particular emergency. Father, help me, I believe thou wilt do it Thou hast said, 'I will help thee,' and I claim thy promise, I expect the help because thou hast promised it." I'll tell you God will help you.

Now, put those things together. Here is a man with a heart-felt, soul-felt communion with Jesus Christ, abiding in Christ, his head and his heart full of God's blessed word. Let that man get down to pray; let that man like Elijah bow before God, and something is going to move in heaven and earth. Well might Queen Mary say she was more afraid of John Knox on his knees than she was of any army in Scotland. A man abiding in God's word in prayer, while God's word abides in him, is one of the grandest powers this world ever saw.

Do you know what David says about the word? He says, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." The best antidote, the best preventive of sin is God's word hid away in our hearts. Have it in your head to repeat the sweet promises; have it in your heart to keep your feet from sin.

The next condition of effectual prayer is *obedience* to the plain commandments of God as laid down in the Bible; not obedience to our opinions about scripture; not obedience to our interpretations of scripture; but obedience to the plain, simple, unmistakable word itself. Here is the trouble with a great many people; they get a notion in their head; they "get their head set"—if I may use that phrase—in a certain way, and they go to the Bible, not to get light or truth or to know God's will, but to bolster up their pet theory. It is in this way that they get into trouble. There must be obedience—not to that sort of thing—but

obedience to the plain, literal, common-sense meaning of God's commands. When you read the Scripture don't read it as a riddle; read it as a plain, common-sense revelation, meaning what it says, and saying what it means; and unless there is something in the context to show that it is to be taken figuratively, take it literally. The context will enable you to decide that question.

Take this one case to illustrate: Jesus said, speaking of Herod, "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils." Was Herod a fox or a man? We know from the context that Herod was a man, and therefore that the word fox in this passage should be taken in a figurative sense. But if there was nothing in the context to show that a man was meant, I would take the word in its literal sense.

Hear what the Book says to prove that obedience is the condition of effectual prayer—1 John iii. 22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." "Whatsoever we ask we receive of him." Did you notice the reason that is given? "Because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." That is a wonderful scripture. And the converse of that proposition is true: A great many people ask God for a great many things which they never receive, because they do not keep his commandments. They fail to do what he tells them. That is the trouble. Thus the principle is clear from God's word that

you can not live a listless, careless, disobedient, inconsistent, backslidden life, and then pray an effectual prayer. And that is just the reason why we have such lifeless, cold, prayerless church members; and such a cold, worldly-minded, worldly-conformed church.

That poet was to an extent inspired who said:

> "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
> The Christian's native air,
> His watchword at the gates of death;
> He enters heaven with prayer."

There is no such thing as growth in grace, there is no such thing as God hearing us, unless we live lives of obedience. What was the peculiarity about Christ? He was one who spent whole nights in prayer, and it was when Christ was praying that he was baptized of the Holy Ghost, and it was when he was praying that he was transfigured. If we are going to get up on the mount of transfiguration and be baptized by the Holy Ghost, we have to spend a great deal of time in prayer.

But it is no use to spend time in prayer unless you are conforming your life to the requirements of God's holy Book. What does God say? He says to the Christian, "Come out and be ye separate." That is, separate from worldly mindedness and worldly conformity. Here is a church member that willfully, knowingly, deliberately violates that scripture, and conforms to the world. Now, do you think he can pray a very effectual prayer? Nay, verily.

Let me be a little specific here. You mothers

have some little children, and we will take the fathers along with you in this. What does God say to you as parents? He says, Train up your children in the way in which they should go. If you do this he promises that when they are old they will not depart from it. He also says to you to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Now, that is God's command. What are most of you parents inclined to do? In the first place, you never read God's word to them, you never pray with your children, or for them, or before them. You let them do as they please on Sunday. You exercise no parental discipline over them. We are living in an age of obedient parents and disobedient children; and there is not a darker cloud that hangs over this land to-day than that. Why is it that your boy is in jail before he is eighteen? He has never been controlled at home, and he is not going to be controlled by the officers of the law; and the first thing that any body knows the sheriff has his hands on him. I believe in bringing your children up in love and kindness, and if that fails, use a switch. I agree with the Presbyterian divine who said that the Shorter Catechism and the switch were good things to bring children up on.

Instead of teaching your children God's word, you are letting them read novels and other useless and hurtful things. Or perhaps you have false notions of society and take your pure, sweet, innocent little girls and put them under the care of a vile, lecherous, French dancing master, to be

taught to dance. After a while you fathers and mothers see your children going off into sin and infidelity and all kinds of wickedness. Perhaps you see them wrecked—dying without God and without hope in the world. And you come here and get down on your knees and pray, "O God, help me to bring up my children in the way they should be brought up; help me to do my duty; help me to be a faithful, earnest, Christian parent. Keep my children, and bless and save them." Do you expect God to hear that prayer? God will be no party to a farce like that. He says, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination unto God?" The idea is this: If a man or woman says, "I am a Christian," and then will not obey God's command, nor heed the words which God speaks, but comes and prays for God's blessing, the prayer of that disobedient soul is an abomination. If you want God to help you to bring up your children right, do your duty and obey God. If you want God to hear your prayers, obey God.

I imagine I hear somebody say, "You are getting some of us in a bad fix this morning." No; you got yourself there, and I am simply showing you the fact. "If that is the case how are we ever going to get God to hear us?" Hear what God says, "Return ye backsliding children." He also says, "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Now, the thing for you to do is to confess the way that you have been living, confess your sins to God, confess your

disobedience. Ask God to forgive you, and upon your confession he has promised to do it. And when you are set right stay right, and ask God to bless you and keep you right, and he will do it. My friends, we can not live as we list and then pray an effectual prayer.

You can not cheat men during the week, and then come and get down here Sunday and pray effectually to God to help you lay up treasures in heaven. He is not going to hear you about laying up treasures in heaven as long as you are so greedy about your treasures on earth. We must live honestly; as God says, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men." You must keep his holy and blessed commandments.

The next condition of effectual prayer is *submission* to the will of Almighty God. 1 John v. 14: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." That is, if our will is according to God's will, if we are submissive to his will. If he wills for us to have it, all right. If he wills for us not to have it, all right. Now, it takes grace to get into this state of submission. It took Paul a great while to reach this state. He had a thorn in the flesh; he prayed God three times to have that thorn taken away. It was a long time before he could submit. God says, "My grace is sufficient for you." It is better to have the thorn and the grace than to have neither the thorn nor the grace.

It is just so with us when we come to submit a

matter to God. We do not know any better than the children what is best for us. Here is a mother sitting down sewing, and here is a little one playing on the floor, and there is a work-basket with a good many things in it, among others a pair of scissors. The little fellow finds his way to the work-basket, and the first thing that he gets hold of is the scissors. Every time he gets them he hurts himself with them. But he wants the scissors, and if his mother takes them away from him he rebels with angry screams. His will is not subordinate to the mother's, but the mother ought to do what is her will and not the child's will. We all are simply grown up children, though some of us are sixty or seventy years old. We often grasp at something we have no use for; something that would hurt us. We ask God for it; but our Father knows best, and very often he will not give us the things we ask. We are not submissive to his holy and righteous will. One of the things that I thank God for to-day is that he did not grant me a great many things I asked for. I can look back now and see that it would have been the worst thing in the world for me if he had answered some of my prayers as I wanted him to answer them. Our Father is infinite in wisdom, in love, in goodness. Let us submit the whole matter to him, and abide by his will. When we do that God will hear us.

A great many of us are like the dear old woman down in Mississippi during the war. She was praying about the war: "O God, let this terrible

war come to a close. Lord, let it end any way you want it to; but, O Lord, let those Yankees get whipped." That is about the character of many of our prayers. We first make up our mind as to the way we want things to go. We then go and pray the Lord that his will may be done; but in our secret hearts we still want it our way. Thus a great many people first make up their minds whom they are going to marry, and then they pray a good deal about it. First go and pray before you make up your mind, and then, after God has guided you in the matter, there will not be so much trouble about divorces.

Hear how the Master prays: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"—then follows that wonderful, "nevertheless" — "nevertheless not my will but thine be done." It takes grace to get up there beside Jesus and be submissive to the will of our heavenly Father. But we can reach this fellowship in Christ's self-denying submissiveness; it is our privilege to reach it. Then God will bless us, and we will pray effectively.

I remember an incident that occurred in Mississippi when I was a boy. There was a mother whose little son was quite sick. It looked as if he were going to die. The physicians and every body gave him up, but that mother knelt by her boy. She would pray and wring her hands, and she would rebel against God. She was not submissive to God's will. God granted her request, as he did the request of the Jews when they prayed for flesh in the wilderness but sent leanness into their soul.

That boy has grown up into a man, and he is a living, veritable vagabond to-day; a disgrace to humanity, and to the mother that bore him. I hold that it would have been a great deal better to have resigned that child submissively into the hands of God and said, "O Father, thy will be done and not mine," letting that little one go to heaven and escape the terrible gauntlet of sin he has to run now.

Friends, if God takes your little one submit to it. I would a great deal rather have a child free from sin, beyond temptation and beyond the snares and pitfalls between the cradle and the grave. I would rather, if it is God's will, have him up yonder with Jesus, pure and spotless and immaculate, washed in the blood of Jesus, and standing close to the throne of Christ, waiting and watching for me, than to have him down in this world of sin. Let us in this matter and in all matters, submit to God, accepting as best whatever he does.

Another condition of effectual prayer is that the *motive* prompting the petition shall be a right motive in the sight of God. James iv. 3: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." "Ye ask"—all right—"and receive not"—why? Because ye ask amiss. Wherein do we ask amiss? "That ye may consume it upon your lusts." The word "lust" there is not used in the lascivious sense, but it is used in the selfish sense. That is, you are praying now for spiritual blessings on your heart and soul. That is all right, but why do you want those spirit-

ual blessings? Do you want them in order that you may be more efficient, that you may be more useful, that you may win souls to Jesus, that you may feed some saint, that you may lift up some fallen one, that you may glorify your Master? Or do you want that blessing on your heart just that you may have it, and enjoy it, and drink it in, and feast upon it; that you may have a good time, and be glad and so happy, all in and of and by yourself? Which is it? Is it the latter? Then your motive is a selfish one. You need not be asking for any more of these things, if that is the motive.

Now, we are getting to a very practical point. You have been a member of the church for years. All that time you have had the love of God, the bread of life, the water of life, the wine of the gospel, and the consolations of God's promises. What have you done with them? Have you ever given a crumb to a poor fellow-mortal? Have you ever said a word to any one? Have you ever imparted one particle of that spiritual life and light and blessing that Christ gave you, to any body else? You say, "I do n't know that I ever have." No, I guess you never have. Now, what do you want with any more grace or blessing? What would you do with it? Just what you have been doing? Do you not know that when the Israelites hoarded the manna that it bred pestilence? You forfeit God's grace if you hoard it in your heart. Such hoarding, to say the least, keeps you from getting any more.

You know on a certain occasion Christ fed five thousand men, besides the women and children, with a few loaves and fishes. Here are the disciples Peter, James, and John, and others. He took a little fish and broke it in two, and a small piece of bread. He gave a part of the fish and a piece of the bread to Peter, and then to John, to Mark and Matthew, and the rest. Suppose Peter had taken his little piece of fish and bread and eaten it on the spot; do you suppose the Savior would have given him any more? No. But what did Peter do? He broke it, and gave a piece to the man next to him. Then the Master gave him another piece, and he gave that to others, and then received still more. Thus these five thousand men were fed from that which the disciples received from Jesus. Jesus gave to them, and as long as they would give to others he would continue to give to them.

Now, then, friends, some of you have taken this bread of life that Jesus gave you, and have never given your child a crumb. You have never given your neighbor a crumb. There is n't a sinner on God's green earth to-day that you have shared a crumb with. What do you want with more? Do you want it for your own selfish enjoyment? God will not accommodate any such a sinner; because grace strikes at the very root of selfishness at the start.

Why do I want you to work? Why do I want you to stay here to-night in the inquiry meeting and point these souls to Christ? For God's glory, for the good of souls, and also for your own good.

Such little crumbs as you have received you have been keeping to yourself. You go home and roll yourself into bed and go to sleep. And your thought seems to be, "If I am all right, it makes no difference who goes to ruin and death just so I escape." You starve your own soul and check your own spiritual life. If you want to get strong go to work; if you want to get more grace use the grace you have. If you want more light let that which God has given you shine.

This is an age of dyspepsia. We don't do enough manual labor. We eat and sit, and sit and eat. We take little physical exercise; we become dyspeptics. What is a good remedy? Bodily activity, out-door exercise. See that woodman swinging his ax. He can eat bacon and cabbage for dinner and digest it, but these people that lead sedentary lives can hardly eat any thing; they are dyspeptics. Just so the church is full of spiritual dyspeptics. They have done nothing since they were converted; they are babies, and must be fed from the ecclesiastical bottle. You can not give them strong meat; that would make them sick. You must give them milk. Now, what is the result? These pastors must put their wits to work, and it takes them a week of the hardest kind of labor to get up a dish of theological jelly, or syllabub, or whipped cream, or whatever you may name it, that is delicate enough for your poor dyspeptic infant digestion. Why? Because you have done nothing. It is not your pastor's fault; he must prepare food to suit the digestive organs of his

congregation. Go to work; exercise your strength in bringing souls to Christ, and you will grow stronger, you will get over your dyspepsia. You will soon be able to digest strong meat. God will help you and bless you.

Make up your mind on one or two things. You are going to continue to be a poor spiritual dwarf, a dwindling, spindling, spiritual dyspeptic, doing nothing but eat and sit and sit and eat, till God takes you to heaven; or else you must decide, "By God's help I will use the grace he has given me, and in the use of it I will ask for more and get more." May God help you. Stay here and help us to-night to win souls to Christ.

Another condition of effectual prayer is that the prayer shall be made in the *name* of the Lord Jesus Christ. John xiv. 13: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Why are you to ask it in the name of Jesus? Because Jesus is the Son of God; Jesus died for my sin; I have no worth or merit of my own; it is all in Christ. You need not pray at all, if you do not pray in the name of Jesus. I will illustrate. You go down to the bank with a check. You must pass the check in, and it must not only have a name on it, but the name that is satisfactory to that cashier and president. Without this you can not get the money. Your prayer is a check on heaven's bank. It must go with a name on it, and with the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. If that name is wanting, it need not go at all. You must pray in the name of Jesus.

The next condition is *faith.* James i. 6: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." You are to ask in faith. Of course, you all know that. But one of the commonest things in this world is to pray, and then never stop to think one moment whether God has heard you or not. Too many pray, and then never plead the promise, never stop to ask whether God is to fulfill the promise or not. A man has a check on the bank, and he goes in and lays the check on the counter, and the cashier lays the money down, but the man puts both hands in his pockets and walks out of the building. He did not get any money. Why? Simply because he did not appropriate what belonged to him. There is a great deal of that kind of praying. You pray to God to give you a promise, and then you do not appropriate that which he has promised.

Finally, we must pray in the *spirit.* Jude xx.: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." That is the last condition of effectual prayer.

My friends, just see how all these conditions fit together. If we are abiding in Christ, and God's word is abiding in us; if we obey God's word and are submissive to his will; if our motive is God's glory and the good of our fellow-man; if we have our faith in God, believing that he will do what he promises and appropriating his promises; and if we are led and guided by the Holy Ghost, we will pray

effectually. The Holy Ghost knows what we need. He knows what is the will of the Father and the Son. He will indite our prayer just in accordance with this divine will. We pray, and the prayer is indited by the Holy Ghost; therefore, the Father will hear, and for the sake of the Son he will grant our petition, and our souls will get a gracious blessing.

May God help us always to pray in the Holy Ghost!

PURE RELIGION.

JAMES i. 27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

I want to call your attention to the two words, "pure religion." That is the topic of our Bible reading this morning. The word "religion" comes from two Latin words, which literally mean "bound back," or "re-bound," or "bound again." Now, I will explain, and you will see the force of that word. God created man pure, holy, free from sin, upright, in a state of sweet communion and fellowship with himself. Sin tore him loose from God destroying this communion and fellowship, severing his union with his Maker, separating his soul from the source of spiritual life. Now, the object of pure religion is to take this fallen, sinful soul, and bind it back to God, reunite it to God. That is the idea of religion. It is to bind, or rather to re-bind, the fallen, lost soul back to God, its Maker, Creator, and Redeemer.

Therefore, you see that the object which our souls are bound to will determine the character of our religion. If our hearts and our affections are bound to idols, then our religion will be idolatrous; if our souls are bound to mere form and

ceremony, our religion will be external, formal, ceremonious. If we are bound to mere ethics and morality, our religion will be merely ethical and moral; but if we are bound to the true and living God, it will be a pure religion. Hence, you see why there are so many kinds of religion. You also see that there is but one religion that is worth any thing.

Now, a man's soul and his religion and his affections may be very properly compared to a vine and its branches and tendrils. A vine can not rise above that stake on which its tendrils have taken hold. If a vine is lying down on the ground it is helpless to lift itself up. The vine can rise just to the height of the object which the tendrils take hold of, and it can not rise any higher. Therefore, if the tendrils take hold of the chips and trash and bricks lying around on the ground, it can not rise above these, but these very things will hold it down there. If you will make a trellis, and get your vine up on the trellis, it can lift itself up by means of the trellis, the tendrils taking hold and climbing up, and thus lifting up the vine. The height of the vine depends upon the height of the thing upon which its tendrils have laid hold.

Just so with the human soul and our religion. The quality of the religion is determined by that upon which our affections have taken hold; and the elevation of the soul depends upon the moral elevation of that upon which we have set our affections. Hence, God says, "Set your affections not on things on earth, but on things above." If you

want to rise to heaven your affections must be on heavenly things. If you want to rise to communion and fellowship with God, your affections must be on God.

This helps us to understand what God did in the incarnation of his Son. You know Christ is called "a righteous Branch," "a Plant of renown." God has put that branch right here on the earth, and made it akin to our humanity. Our affections can go out to the God-man, Jesus Christ, and take hold of him, and be entwined around him. And since Christ is God, and as high as heaven, our souls can be lifted up as high as God, when they lay hold on Christ. Therefore, that man whose affections are not entwined around Jesus Christ, let his religion and his morals be what they may, will never arise to the height of divinity and purity in God's sight. Therefore, the religion of Jesus Christ is the highest, the purest, the best religion the world ever saw.

You talk about saving yourself, elevating, and purifying yourself, without Christ. You might just as well talk about the vine that is lying yonder on the ground, with all its tendrils entwined around the things on the earth, rising up and elevating itself. It could not do it if it were unencumbered, but now its very attachment to the things on the ground keep it down. So your poor soul, weak, deceitful, sin-cursed, by itself can not arise. It not only has no power to do so, but it is so encumbered with these worldly things that unless it gets hold of God it will never be elevated.

There is scarcely any other word in the Bible so egregiously abused and misapplied as this word religion. A great many people think if they simply have religion they are safe. It is not so. Safety depends altogether upon *what sort* of religion you have. Some of the most religious men in the world are the most godless. Saul of Tarsus was a very religious man when he was standing there while they stoned Stephen; but he was a very ungodly man. That Mohammedan that stops at the hour of prayer, and kneels down and says his prayers, is a very religious man, but he is not a very godly man. He may live by robbery and violence, he may be ready to cut off your head, too, if you refuse to accept his religion.

The word religion occurs but four times in God's word, and not twice in the same sense. In Acts xxvi. 5, Paul uses this word. He says, "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." Here you have one kind of religion, the religion of the Pharisees. It was an outside, external religion, a religion made up entirely of forms, and ceremonies, of rites and hollow external pomposity, without any true spiritual worship or genuine love and loyalty to God. Hence, Jesus Christ says, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Is your religion a mere outward ceremony, a mere round of external forms, that affects only your deportment, that does not get down into your heart and soul? If so, yours is the religion of the Phar-

isee. It is not worth the time it takes for you to go through the farce of its performances. O my friends, we must have an inside religion, a religion that takes hold of our hearts and souls, and molds life and character and conduct.

But again, in James i. 26, another kind of religion is mentioned. It is a *vain* religion. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." That means that if religion is not seated in the heart sufficiently to bridle the tongue, control the temper, and regulate the life, then that man's religion is vain. How is it about your religion? Does it control your conduct, your tongue, your life? If it does not, it is vain. That is, it is hollow, empty, useless. It does not amount to any thing here; it will not amount to any thing hereafter. Dear friend, do n't live under the delusion that a vain religion will keep you out of hell. It will not do it. If your religion is so empty and vain and hollow as not to make you a better man or woman here, it will not get you into the kingdom on high.

Paul speaks of another kind of religion in Gal. i. 13, the *religion of the Jews*—that is, the degenerated Judaism of that day. It is mentioned in contradistinction to pure, simple Christianity, and not only in contradistinction to it, but as in antagonism with it. No religion was so antagonistic to the religion of Jesus Christ as degenerated Judaism in the days of the apostles. What was its peculiarity? For one thing they made more of human traditions

than they did of the written word of God. They trusted more in the Talmud than in the Sacred Oracles. The Talmud, as you know, was made up of the writings and wise sayings of learned Jews, the laws, traditions, opinions, theories, and interpretations of the uninspired members of the Sanhedrim. The Jews honored these traditions more than they did the word of God.

Is that the sort of religion you have? Is somebody's opinion, or somebody's creed, or theory, or doctrine, worth more to you than God's word? Have you adopted some pet notion to which you hold on in spite of the word of God? Then yours is a religion modeled after this type of Judaism in contradistinction to Bible religion.

Then we read in the text, James i. 27, of "*pure religion.*" Only this sort will make you a better man, elevate your character, and save your soul. Only this kind will re-bind you to God, taking your affections and entwining them around the Lord Jesus Christ, and lifting you up and up toward the Father, until you are transformed into his likeness and image.

There are many kinds of religion. Here is the Mohammedan faith; some people think a great deal of that. And here is the religion of Buddha; some, even in America, are silly enough to think about that more than about the religion of Christ. And do you know what the highest hope of Buddha's religion is? It is simply *annihilation.* It is not Mohammedanism, nor Buddhism, nor Pharisaism, nor yet a vain profession, or empty formalism that

we need; but let us never stop until we know for ourselves that we have pure religion.

I have noticed this peculiarity of humanity in things not pertaining to religion: there are some people who have a great deal of affectation about them, and consequently they put on a great many airs.

My observation has been that their affectation is a standing advertisement: "There is nothing inside of me, and consequently I must put on appearances outside." That will hold good in every thing. I care not whether it is a mere matter of intelligence, information, dress, deportment, behavior, work, it will hold good. You see a man who has any thing *in* him, any force of character, worth, common sense, or nobility, and he will not always be making parade about it. You never saw such a man as that affected—never. A vain, affected man is always an empty, a hollow, a little man.

It is precisely that way in matters of religion. I have observed that those people and churches that have most of the true, genuine religion of Christ, go along in the plain, unassuming, old-fashioned, straight-forward, Bible way. But I have observed, and I know the same has ever been true in the history of the world, that just as pure religion begins to decrease in the human heart, formalism, and legalism also, begin to increase in the life.

Why, some people could not do *this* during certain parts of the week, and they could not do *that*. They were very particular and squeamish and nice

about little non-essentials and technicalities and forms and peccadillos. But when it came to the great, vital matter of loving and serving God and following Jesus Christ in pure fidelity and consecration, they did not know or care much about it. Mark it! the less there is in a man socially, intellectually, or religiously, the more parade he will make about it. The same principle is suggested in the common old saying, "When you hear a man always boasting about his honesty, you had better watch him." Just so, pure religion "vaunteth not itself," but like God's Son, is meek and modest and humble.

Now, I am going this morning to give you seven verses of scripture, each one of which presents a distinct manifestation of pure religion. You can not see religion; you can judge it only by its manifestations and its fruits. What are the manifestations of pure religion?

I answer from God's word, that the first one is having the *spirit of Christ.* Rom. viii. 9: "But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." There is the first stone in this whole building, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." That is, we must have the Holy Spirit abiding in us as he did in Christ, producing fruit unto holiness. What are the striking characteristics and manifestations of the spirit of Jesus? I will answer, in the first place, meekness and humility. He was meek, quiet, not self-

seeking, not self-obstrusive. And joined to the meekness was humility. O the beautiful humility of the Lord Jesus Christ. O the depths of love, of faith, of power, of grace, of goodness and virtue there were in him! And with it all how meek, how humble was the Son of God! That is just what I said a while ago. The more there is in a man, the less of vain pomposity and show and bluster and brag there is in him always.

Dear friends, have we that spirit to-day? Have we that meek and humble spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it deep down in our hearts and souls? And are we willing to go quietly along and be faithful to God and do our duty and believe in the promised reward? Talk about men and all the traits that make them noble and blessed and god-like and Christ-like; but there is no trait more ennobling and heavenly than humility. We all admire, we all love—not pretended meekness, not mock humility—but humility and meekness in their divine genuineness and Christ-likeness.

Another peculiar characteristic of the spirit of Jesus Christ was *obedience* unto his heavenly Father. He said, "I must work the works of him that sent me." He said, "My meat and my drink is"—what? To seek my pleasure, my pastime, my ease? No; "My meat and my drink is to do the will of my Father which is in heaven." Hear what he says, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" From the time Christ is twelve years old, when we see him there conversing with the doctors in the temple, until from that

cross he ascended to the kingdom, there was one great, all-absorbing thing that controlled his thought and words and life. It was the spirit of obedience to the will of God. It did not matter whether it was agreeable or disagreeable, whether it brought persecution or fame, popularity or unpopularity, the one question with Jesus was obedience to God.

Friends, saints of God, professors of religion, have we that spirit? Is that the all-controlling, predominating, regulating, propelling principle in our lives? Is our chief concern—not our ease, not comfort, nor pleasure, nor enjoyment, nor amusement—but obedience to him who bought us with his blood? obedience to him who said, "Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me?" If so, that is pure religion.

Another remarkable thing about the spirit of Christ was, absolute *submission* to his heavenly Father. It mattered not what happened; if he was to be betrayed by friends, he would submit; if he was sold by a disciple for thirty pieces of silver, he submitted; if he was to be arrested by a band of ruffians at the dead of night, he was unresisting, notwithstanding he said to Peter, "Thinkest thou that I can not now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" He submits because it is God's will. Is he scourged? He submits to that and after a while he submits to be nailed to that cruel tree. Now, what is the secret of it all? Hear what he says, "The cup that my

Father gave me, shall I not drink it?" "My Father gave the cup and I will drink any cup my Father gives." O saints of God, have you that spirit? In your misfortunes, persecutions, afflictions, trials, poverty; in every thing else that comes upon you do you bow submissively, remembering that God says, "All things work together for good to them that love him."

Not only that, but Jesus Christ had the spirit of true, undaunted, unfaltering, uncompromising, *moral courage.* When all men forsook him he had the courage to stand by the right and to stand alone. Not a disciple, except John—and Peter off there at a distance—stood with him at that mock trial. He had the courage to stand alone; he had the courage to pull the mask off of those hypocritical Pharisees; to expose the hollow farces of the day in which he lived; to run counter to the prejudices and whims of a godless multitude by whom he was surrounded. And finally, he stood before the high-priest and was adjured by him to say whether or not he was the Christ. His life depended on the answer; for the high-priest was placing him exactly in this position: "If he denies it then away goes his claim that he is the Son of God; if he affirms it, then we will put him to death for doing so." And he had courage to face death single-handed and alone, to stand on principle, to answer fearlessly at the sacrifice of his heart's blood. That is the spirit of Jesus. Have we the courage to follow Jesus in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation? to stand

undaunted on God's truth, popular or unpopular, fashionable or unfashionable? Can you follow the footprints of Jesus? That is pure religion.

The next manifestation of pure religion is having the *mind of Christ.* Phil. ii. 5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Now, that is a truth akin to the other, but nevertheless distinct from the other. This has reference especially to the mental characteristics of the Son of God. What about the mind that was in Christ? It was a pure mind, in that it would not entertain impure thoughts; it would not dwell upon impure objects; it would not feed upon impure things. Do you think Christ ever read an impure book, or dwelt upon an impure thought?

Our character and our conduct are very largely molded and determined by the objects upon which our minds dwell. A girl or a boy that begins to read worthless, sensational, impure fiction would, at the age of fifteen, as soon be in jail as to read a good book, or God's word. The mind has been corrupted and made impure, and that molds the character, gives shape to the soul, determines the life. Just so of other evil or debasing things. Now, "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Be pure-minded. Avoid impure thoughts and impure things. Let not your mind be occupied in reading impure literature, I care not what it is, whether in a newspaper or a book.

Again, Jesus Christ's mind was pure because there was in it no hatred, envy, malice, strife—no

unlovely mental exercise. But some Christian says, "These things pop into my head before I know it, and how can I help it?" Perhaps you can not help their popping in sometimes; but I will tell you what you can help; you can prevent their staying in. You can not prevent the birds from flying over your head, but you can prevent their building a nest in your hair. Just so with impure thoughts. You can keep them from staying with you. Pray for deliverance from them just as you pray against other evils.

Another thing about Christ: he was *heavenly-minded*, in contradistinction to being worldly-minded. I have no patience with fanatics. Christ was heavenly-minded, but he could work at the carpenter's bench; he could attend to his earthly duties, and still keep faithful to his duties to his Father. We are not to be so heavenly-minded that we will neglect our wives or our husbands, our children or our parents. We are not to be so holy that we can not make an honest living, or attend to our domestic duties. But we are to be so heavenly-minded that we will not let these legitimate and proper things absorb all our time and attention. We are to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; to attend first to those high and most important duties, and then attend to these others. A heavenly-minded man is a man that is not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Let this mind then be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

Another manifestation of pure religion is *brid-*

ling the tongue. James i. 26: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." "If any man"—now, the word "man" is used in its generic sense, and it includes women. If any man or woman among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his or her tongue, that person's religion is a vain religion. The heart is the seat of religion: "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Now if you have not enough pure religion in your heart to regulate and control your tongue, then your religion is a vain religion. To use a common phrase, it is "no account." If it can not control your tongue it can not control your character or your conduct; and if it can not control character or conduct, it is no religion at all. It is a mere farce. You long-tongued women — and men —tattling and gadding and gossiping around town, retailing every little vague rumor you hear, meddling with things that do not concern you, if that is your habit, if that is the character that you have formed, go, I beg you, to your closet and get religion before you come back to-night. You haven't any now. If you profess to have it is an old, vain, empty farce. It is worth nothing at all.

Men have their faults, and women have theirs. Some sins are peculiar to men, and some to women. I have seen some long-tongued, gossiping men; but as a rule this sin belongs to women. Sisters, let me talk to you just a little. Some other time I will give these men some very plain talk about

their sins. But let me now say this to you: one tattling woman can do more devilment than all the preachers in town can counteract. Half of the neighborhood broils, and the church quarrels, and the disturbances in communities, come from some gossiping woman. Here is the way to deal with such persons: If a tattling woman—or man for that matter—comes to you, say "I don't want to hear it. If it is the truth it isn't necessary to retail it around; and if it is not the truth, it is very wicked and abominable to tell it; and I don't want to listen to such things."

You know it is said of Alexander the Great that when any body came to him with an ill-natured story he always put his hand over one ear, saying, "I am saving this ear for the other side." But how about us? We listen with both ears; we drink the story right in, and then go and tell it to somebody else. If there is a character on earth that is utterly detestable it is a tattler, man or woman. Do not be a retailer of scandal—an idle mischief-maker. It is doing Satan's work. If you do this God says your religion is vain. Do you think I am harsh and hard in the words I use in condemning this evil? My words are not a bit harder than those used by James. Let me read you the first ten verses of the third chapter of James.

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and

able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." A long-tongued, tattling man or woman is devil-possessed. "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." The connection between the tongue and pure religion is vital.

The next manifestation of pure religion is *visiting the fatherless and widows.* James i. 27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

If Christ were in this town to-day in the flesh as he once was in Bethany and Jerusalem; and if he

were sick away out yonder in a little cabin on the outskirts of town, and it were reported: "The Lord Jesus is out there sick; he has nothing to eat, and very little clothing; he is not comfortable," you would see the carriages and the buggies and the phætons hurrying to the place to help him. You would go to see him and ask him to your house. You would carry him a great many things. Yes, I too would like to go.

Do you know that here in this town are some of God's saints needing your help? Perhaps there is a poor widow out yonder in that little pine-pole cabin. Perhaps she is out of wood or coal, out of money, with four or five little children, some of them sick, and nothing to eat and no fuel to keep them warm. Have you been to see her? Have you carried her any bread? Have you asked the doctor to go to her assistance? Have you told the druggist to send medicine and that you will pay for it? Hear what Jesus Christ says, "I was sick and ye visited me. And they said, When saw we thee sick and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Here is the principle laid down, that Jesus Christ takes what is done unto the least of his children as done unto himself. That is pure religion, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and help them and do them good. You are very anxious to go around and call on some celebrated character, or some wealthy man that

settles in your town. When President Cleveland and his wife made the tour of the South, at a certain town I remember that the police could hardly keep the women off the train, so eager were they to see Mrs. Cleveland, who was sick. But if that had been a poor, sick woman on the outskirts of the town it would have required the police to drag them thither. That is the difference. Dear friends, let us seek out God's poor, and take care of them.

Another manifestation of pure religion is to keep ourselves *unspotted from the world.* James i. 27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Christians, it takes very little to spot a character; it takes very little to soil the good name of a saint. Suppose this afternoon I should go with three of these honored pastors to a whisky saloon. Suppose we all should drink whisky, and then take a game of cards. What would happen? I will tell you. Our characters would be spotted. The story would be in every paper in this Southland to-morrow, and in the Northland too, for that matter. We would be spotted. We would deserve to be.

But I challenge you to show me in God's word any restrictions upon conduct that apply to God's ministers that do not apply to all of God's people. You have no more right to get drunk than preachers have; you have no more right to play cards and dance and go to theaters than preachers

have. We all are commanded to keep ourselves unspotted from the world—not simply not to mix with the world, but to keep unspotted from it.

You hear somebody asking, What is the harm of dancing? What is the harm in a game of whist or euchre? What is the harm in going to a hop or the theater? That is not the question. The question is, Can we do these things and keep unspotted from the world? You might discuss the question of right and wrong, but we are not now considering that. It is not so much a question of harm as of being unspotted from the world and keeping unspotted.

Suppose there is going to be a marriage in town to-night. The ceremony will take place at eight o'clock. Here is the bride; she is clad in her spotless robes with long white train, and adorned with her white bridal veil; her raiment is spotless and white. About 7.30 they say to her, "The bridegroom is here," and she says, "As I am not going to be married until eight, I believe I will take a sweep around to the kitchen." So she goes down through the kitchen, brushing her snowy garments against the old smutty stove, coming in contact with other objects that leave their mark, soiling her gloved hands by taking the old, sooty poker and stirring the coals. Then she sweeps around in the corner among the cobwebs. All right. What is the harm, I would like to know, in walking in the kitchen, or stirring the fire, or sweeping down the cobwebs? Then she marches back to the sitting-room, where the bridegroom is waiting. What do

you suppose he would say to her? Would he not say, "I am not ready to become the husband of a woman who is so foolish as that, so lacking in the sense of the propriety of occasions?" Would you blame him? I would not. What was the harm? It is not so much a question of harm. It is a question of the violation of common propriety, and a failure to realize the significance of the occasion.

Now, here is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, and the church is called the bride, the Lamb's wife. Her robes are spotless, white, pure, and clean, the righteousness of the saints. The bride is waiting for the Bridegroom, and before the bridal supper she says, "I will take a peep around through the devil's kitchen." So you hop and you dance and you drink; you play cards and you desecrate the Sabbath. You get spotted, and miserably besmirched. And then you ask, "What is the harm in all this?" Here is the question: When you go before Jesus Christ in that soiled, spotted garb, will he not reject you? He will have no such bride. Nothing that is impure or unclean or defiled can enter that city. It is one thing to conform to the world; it is another thing to be pure and unspotted before God and the Father.

Another mark of pure religion is diligently *to follow every good work.* 1 Tim. v. 10: "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." Mark it! that is applicable not only

to Christians in general, but the women in particular. That is a manifestation of pure religion—if she has diligently followed every good work.

Dear Christian women, do not spend your time in seeking the right to vote, or hold office, or run the government. That is coming down from your high position, and a letting down of your Christian character and dignity. This is what women, as well as men, ought to do: "Diligently follow every good work."

The last manifestation of pure religion is *building up yourselves on your most holy faith.* Jude xx. 21: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." "Building up yourselves," not on society, not on cards and amusements, not on pleasure. We are to build up character, our spiritual faith, our spiritual power, our spiritual superstructure, our spiritual manhood. On what are we to build up ourselves? On our most holy faith. Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of our faith, and this brings us back to the figure of the vine climbing upward. The soul is the vine; its affections have taken hold on Christ. What is our business? To keep entwining our affections around him; building ourselves up, lifting ourselves, climbing up, rising higher and higher, into sweet communion and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christian, have you grown any? Have you made any progress toward maturity since you were

converted? I once heard a quaint old Methodist preacher say, "A great many church members are like young wasps; they are bigger when they are born than ever afterward." That is not the Bible idea. You are not always to be a baby and have to live on milk; you are to build yourself up. Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Get newer hold, fresher and stronger hold, and higher hold on the Lord Jesus Christ. After a while you will attain to the stature of a man, of a woman, in Christ.

May God bless us, and keep us, and give us that religion that is pure and undefiled in the sight of God; and may we spend a blissful eternity with the Lord Jesus in God's holy, sinless heaven.

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

OUR topic to-day is, A Mother's Influence, and the text is Prov. xxxi. 1: "The words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him." Here was a woman fit to be the mother of a king, for she was a faithful teacher of her son in her home.

Marriage was instituted by the Lord; hence, the divine command, "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Out of this institution of marriage springs the family—fatherhood, motherhood, childhood, the home; and upon the family is based the well-being of society, of nationalities, of church and state. They all stand or fall with the family, and the family stands or falls with marriage. Hence, among the predictions of sad and distressing things which shall come to pass in the "latter times," we find it foretold that there shall be those who give heed "to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, *forbidding to marry.*" One of the darkest clouds that hangs over our great nation to-day is the growing laxity of the marriage tie, the growing facility with which divorces can be obtained. Thus the family, society, civil and religious liberty are in danger of being undermined. I stand in doubt of any man or woman who has

not a high regard for marriage, and also for motherhood.

I want to talk to you this morning about mothers, and the mother's influence. There are few things in this world or in heaven above that God has more honored than motherhood. When he sent his Son to save the world he might perhaps have sent him in many other ways; but the fact is that he did send him "made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law." God bestowed upon a woman the honor of being the mother of his Son. When I think of God setting this seal of exalted honor upon motherhood I can scarcely tolerate the idea entertained by some people that the mother's lot is one of degrading drudgery rather than the place and path of distinguished usefulness and glory.

Now, let us go to God's word and see from that what are some of the obligations, responsibilities, honors, and privileges that God has conferred on motherhood. I am going to introduce seven mothers, all of whom exercised a very potent influence over their children, some for good and some for evil.

By reading these passages we will see *how* these mothers influenced their children. In the first place, Rebecca influenced her child by her *example.* Gen. xxvii. 15–17: "And Rebecca took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob, her younger son; and she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth

of his neck; and she gave the savory meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob." Isaac was going to bless Esau, and Rebecca wanted Jacob to get the blessing. In order to secure it she must anticipate God and deceive her husband. Instead of trusting God to bring the blessing upon Jacob's head, she resorted to deception and falsehood, and this example her son Jacob was ready to follow. While Esau, the hairy man, was gone out to seek venison, Rebecca killed a kid and put the hairy skin on Jacob's hands and around his neck, and he took the savory meat and went to his father and said, "I am Esau, thy first-born," and with this lie he stole his brother's blessing. Here was a mother's pernicious example, an example of trickery and fraud. It influenced her child ever afterward. Jacob seems never to have fully recovered from it. And the sad part of it was, she not only influenced Jacob, but she brought about a deadly feud between him and Esau. Jacob had to flee for his life, and Rebecca never saw him afterward. To her dying day the shadow of that pernicious example was on her and on her child.

You see how serious a thing your example before your children is. By your conduct and words you are giving shape to material that is to outlast Cleopatra's Needle or the Pyramids, to endure when the sun shall be darkened and the stars have fallen. To you, mothers, more than to any one else, this trust is committed. You touch and influence these souls during the very time of their greatest suscep-

tibility. No time in the life of a human being is of such importance as the first ten years. What your child is at ten years old, so far as bias of character is concerned, so far as the moral or immoral tendencies of the soul are concerned, he will be, more or less, through life. Now, up to that period, the child is peculiarly and especially under the influence of the mother. The father is gone about his business; the little one is playing around its mother's knee, the developing soul is under her care and guardianship, unconsciously her example, whether it is good, bad, or indifferent, is repeated and repeated until it is engraved into the very conscience and heart and soul of her child; until it becomes part of the child's moral fiber, the ground-work of its moral character.

Dear mother, what a privilege and what an honor it is to take these little ones and mold them for God and for heaven! Nothing so affects your child as your example. We do not always realize what close observers these little children are. They watch you from the time they begin to observe at all, and your example is the thing that they are going to follow.

Are you high-tempered, fractious, rough, severe, abusing the servants, storming at the children, and scolding right and left? Your children will do the same thing. A woman in a certain town had a reputation for storming at the servants and children and every body about the house; and her children had a reputation for storming at one another, at the servants, and at their school-mates. Certainly:

what the mother does, the children are going to do also.

In a town in North Carolina there lived a good Quaker woman, earnest and godly. She had a dear little girl, about eight or nine years old. The mother told me this story: "One day I came back from church, and my little daughter said to me, 'Mother, I don't see that going to the meeting does thee any good. Thee is just as uppish when thee comes back as before thee goes.' Ah," said the mother, "I haven't been 'uppish' since. I realized that the child was watching me, and little had I dreamed till then of the influence that I was exerting on her." Are you uppish? Your children will be uppish. Do you practice fraud and deception in the social world? They will do the very same thing.

I knew of a case of this kind: A mother, we will call her Mrs. Jones, was sitting in the house one day and the door-bell rang. Her little children were around her, and one little girl was playing in the corner with her dolls. The servant announced, "Mrs. Brown has called to see you." "Mrs. Brown has called to see me? I'd like to know what she has come to see me for. I haven't time to leave my work just to talk to her." Still she gets up, gets things arranged, and goes into the parlor with a smile on her face. "Good-morning, Mrs. Brown, I am so glad to see you. It has been so long since you were here before. I hope you are quite well. And your husband is well? I'm so glad you came." After Mrs. Brown is gone Mrs. Jones says: "Here I have lost all this time.

I don't like to be bothered in any such way." Now, her little daughter Mary had a playmate named Martha, and little Martha came one day to see Mary. The servant came in and said, "Little Martha has come to see Mary." "I'd like to know," said Mary, with pouting lips, "what she has come to see me for. I don't want to be bothered with her, losing all my time. I am just mending my doll-clothes, and making my little doll a dress." Then, just as little Martha came in, she said, "Why good-morning, Martha, I am so glad to see you. Come, let's go and play with our dolls." Perhaps that is amusing in one sense, but, in another sense, it is solemn and sad. There is a mother's example of deception, a hollow social farce, engraved upon the memory, shaping the thoughts and blunting the conscience of that child. She is already acting out the very same thing she sees in her mother.

Whatever you do your children are going to do. All who have observed men closely know that this is a fact. If you let me see the child and be with it a little while I will tell you what kind of a mother it has. Are you negligent, careless, and crabbed? Are you given to gossip and deception? Just such a child as that you will have. Dear mother, for the sake of your little ones, may God help you to watch your example. Of course fathers ought to set a good example too; they are inexcusable and guilty if they do not. But especially ought the mothers to do it, because the child is so directly under their influence.

I know a beautiful young lady, accomplished, stylish, and cultured, who is to-day a confirmed infidel, because of the inconsistent example of her mother, who claims to be a Christian. Mothers, there is not a preacher in America that has half the influence over your little children that you have. For their sakes, use it for good; and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. By your example you are to lead your children upward or downward.

Next, let us consider the story of Jochebed. She influenced her child, Moses, by her *protection.* Ex. ii. 2, 3: "And the woman conceived and bare a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink." Pharaoh had issued his heartless decree that all the male children of the Hebrews should be put to death. When Moses was born, Jochebed resolved to save the beautiful child. At first she kept him in her own house, but after a while the child grew larger, and she could no longer protect him at home. She must send him away from the shelter of the home roof. Then she devised means by which his life might still be preserved. She wove or plaited an ark or small boat of bulrushes, perhaps something like the willow work of the present day, making it water-proof with pitch, and then she put the child in it, and placed it in the water. It would have been

of no use to put the child in the basket, or the basket in the river, without the protecting influence of the pitch within and without.

It is just so with you and your child. There is no cruel edict of a Pharaoh demanding the murder of your little ones, but they are exposed almost from the time they are born to ten thousand pernicious, demoralizing, and degrading influences from which it is your solemn duty to protect them. As long as they are under your roof, O mother, protect those little ones. How are you going to do it?

In the first place, pitch their hearts and minds and consciences and souls with God's word so that they may be proof against the tide of sin which threatens to ingulf them. Imbed God's truth in the heart of a child, and after he has grown up there will not be powers enough on earth to shake his faith. I thank God that my parents instilled into my mind the *very words* of God as soon as I was able to take them in; and of all the passages that are precious to me those that were imprinted upon my heart and conscience in childhood are most so.

Let me point out a few things against which you ought to protect your children while they are under your direct influence. They should be saved from the hollow conventionalities of what is called society; from the influence of such performances as Mrs. Jones goes through when she welcomes Mrs. Brown with her hypocritical, "I am so glad to see you." Show these things to your child in

their true light. Save the children from the hollow mockeries of fashionable society.

Protect your child against the pernicious literature of our day. Baneful papers, pamphlets, tracts, and books are scattered broadcast all over this land. In a Southern city one of the leading book-store men said to me: "You would be astonished if you could come into this store of a Saturday afternoon or Saturday night, and see how many girls and boys buy dime novels to read on Sunday." He said, "Hundreds of the children are reading and devouring this pernicious trash, the adventures of Jesse James, Police Gazettes, and abominable novels."

You would prosecute a butcher who would sell your children tainted meat; and still you let your darling little ones feed heart and mind and soul upon tainted, corrupting, poisonous literature. We suffer this putrid mind-food to be sold all over this land? May God help you to protect your children. It is your duty to God, and to your child, to know what your child reads, and to guard his intellectual and moral diet more carefully than you do the food that nourishes his body.

Parents ought also to protect their children against games and amusements that lead to evil associations and vicious habits. We should save our boys from the insinuating and pernicious practice of card-playing. "O," you answer, "just a little whist now and then at home—there is no harm in that certainly." "There can be nothing wrong in a nice little fashionable progressive-

eucnre party." I know, and a great many people know that there are plenty of gamblers to-day who began their downward course by learning how to play cards in such games of whist or euchre, perhaps with their mothers, or sisters, or fathers, in the family room. Dear mothers and fathers, I beg you to put those pernicious cards in the fire when you get home.

I hear somebody say, "It is fashionable." I do n't care if it is; it is a fashion that has damned men socially, spiritually, eternally. While your children are young and under your immediate sympathy and influence, guard them against these things; and when they go out into the world, let them go with their hearts fortified within and without with wholesome Bible doctrine. Then your sons and daughters will be able to run the gauntlet of temptation; they will not be drowned in this fashionable whirlpool. They will not live frivolous, useless lives and at last go down to eternal death.

I want now to call your attention to a mother who influenced her child by her *dedication* of him to God. This mother was Hannah, and the child, Samuel. 1 Samuel i. 27, 28: "For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him; therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshiped the Lord there." Hannah was a noble, faithful woman—not like many of your society women, who run off to the springs or the mountains in summer,

and there, while they dance, play cards, and have a good time, turn their darling little ones over to some ordinary nurse. Nor was she like some of your women's rights women, who seem to think it a reproach to be a mother. She felt profoundly the high honor of having a child given to her by God. It was a privilege to take that child and dedicate it to God. Hear what she says, "I prayed for this child." "I have given him to the Lord and I will train him for the Lord." See her as she takes little Samuel and brings him to God's house and there dedicates him to God's service. I have no doubt she prayed for him while she made the little coats, which once a year she took to him in the sanctuary where he was growing up through a faithful childhood to be a holy and godly man, a prophet, and a judge in Israel. It is an honor to be a mother. Children are a blessing. The Book says, "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." It is an honor to bring them up and to dedicate them to God and to his service.

We are told that the father of Hannibal took him, when he was a little child, into the temple, and dedicated him to Mars, the god of war, and made the child swear that he would hate the Romans and fight them till he died. You know how faithfully Hannibal kept that vow. So, dear saints, take your little ones and dedicate them to Almighty God. In this I have no reference to infant baptism. I am not speaking of that. I want the child itself to be given to God. Will you excuse a reference to

my own personal history? I give it to honor God and to enforce this principle. On the day of my birth my father took me in his arms and dedicated me to God and to the ministry, and prayed that the offering might be accepted. He never told me this for fear it might influence my decision about the ministry; and he died before I ever preached. But after his death my mother told me about it. When I get to heaven I expect to sit down under the shade of the trees on the banks of the river of life, and talk with my sainted father, who gave me to God the morning I was born. And I thank God that I had an earnest, faithful mother, who did not dedicate me to a dancing school, or to card playing, or any form of the service of the devil.

Mothers, upon whose altars have you dedicated your children? Do I hear some of you say, "It is such a drudgery to be a mother and look after children?" You have not a correct idea of this matter at all. Was it drudgery to Hannah to make those little coats for Samuel? Was it drudgery to bring up that child for God? Here is the true and noble mission of woman. Here is something higher than being President, than voting, or pleading law, or practicing medicine, or agitating woman's rights, or managing civil government. Hannah did not try to do any of these things. What did she do? She trained her son for God's work and the nation's work; and there is your duty, mother. Your business is not to try to rule church and state, but to be queen in the home; to train your children, to send forth sons whom God

will honor. That is your honor, that is your glory.

You may be poor, a mother in a humble home. It may be that you are saying to yourself: "Here I am circumscribed; I have to stay here all the time and cook for these little ones, wash and mend their clothes. It takes all my time. I am limited, tied down." Ah, mother, it may be a little John Wesley, a Whitfield, a Chalmers, a Moody, whose clothes you are patching, whose little stockings you are darning.

Be faithful to God, and dedicate that little one to him; and though you may never be known by any body who lives out of sight of the smoke of your chimney, yet your son may win souls by the hundreds and thousands, and when he walks the streets of the New Jerusalem, you will go with him, leaning on his arm.

Several years ago I was at Northfield, Mass., at Mr. Moody's home. I went to his house to see him and his mother, who was still living. There was the old house, formerly in the country, then in the village. Here that dear mother had reared her five or six sons. As I took her hand and looked into her face, I felt, "You are the woman that gave the world a man who has stirred two continents. I would rather be you than Queen Victoria, the mother of the Prince of Wales. I would rather wear your crown than share all the pleasure and glitter of all the fashionable society women in the world." I thank God that the dear mother that toiled and worked for me, and struggled to

train up her boy for the ministry and the service of God, was spared to see her son preaching the gospel of Christ. The mother of Newton could not write the Principia, but she could be the mother of the man who did. Bacon's mother could not be a great philosopher and statesman, but the attainments and glory of her son shed a glory on her. Paul's mother could not be a great apostle and missionary, but every soul won to Christ by her son belongs also to her.

When I think how glorious and exalted is the mother's mission I can scarcely restrain my contempt for these fastidious society women, whose only object in living seems to be pleasure, amusement, entertainment—to be a sort of butterfly, just to flit around—and they look down upon motherhood as if it were a reproach. But I also pity them from the depth of my heart; and it makes me sad to see these faithful mothers in Israel, these earnest, godly, level-headed, common-sense, old-fashioned women, passing off the stage of action, while many of those who are to succeed them are the frivolous devotees of fashion and pleasure who never had a serious thought of their responsibility to man or God.

Let us next see how Elizabeth influenced her son, John the Baptist, by her *holiness*. Luke i. 6, 14, 15: "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. . . . . And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the

Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."

These words refer to Zacharias and Elizabeth, and their son, John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater." What kind of a mother did John the Baptist have? We are told that with her husband she walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. She did not walk with the fashionable, godless women who lived simply for pleasure and amusement. No. She was a holy, earnest woman, a woman filled with the Holy Ghost, and her son was a man filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth.

We need holy women to be the mothers of the men who are to rule our country; to be the mothers of our future preachers and elders and deacons and stewards, the pillars in God's church. These foolish, frivolous, fastidious, society girls are not fit to be the mothers of such true, noble, godly men as the world and church need. Like produces like, and we need godly mothers walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, to rear a holy and godly generation.

My hope for my country is not in the Democratic, nor the Republican, nor the Prohibition party. We must begin back at the family altar, back in the family circle, with godly women and godly men who will rear up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Then God will be honored, and civil and religious liberty will be perpetuated.

Let us next look at a mother whose influence was evil. Herodias influenced her daughter to sin by her *instruction*. Matt. xiv. 7, 8: "Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before *instructed of her mother*, said, give me here John the Baptist's head in a charger." Here is John the Baptist murdered in prison. How? By that young, foolish girl demanding of Herod that it should be done. And why did she demand it? She was "instructed" of her mother. A mother so instructed her child that the child demands the head—the life—of one of the greatest and best men that ever lived. What a contrast between the mother of John the Baptist and the mother of this girl!

Which mother are you like? How do you instruct your children? Do you instruct them in the oracles of God, in God's holy gospel, about salvation, about holy and godly living? I am afraid many of you do not. I fear some of you are like Herodias, instructing your children how to play cards, how to dance, how to be fashionable. If so, God pity you. I don't know which to pity most, you or your child. Are you instructing your children in trashy, pernicious literature? Are you teaching them how to keep up with the latest fashions? Are you failing to instruct them in the great things of truth, righteousness, and godliness?

Some people say it is no harm to dance. Here we learn that the head of one of the greatest men

that was ever born was severed from his shoulders, the occasion being the subtle influence of a dance. It is a matter of record that of the thousands of fallen women in New York city the great majority were led into the beginning of their downward career through promiscuous dancing.

Next, let us see how the Syrophenican mother helped her child by her prayer. Mark vii. 26: "The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter." Here was a mother whose child was devil-possessed, and she prayed for that child, and continued to pray until she got the blessing.

Do you pray for your children? Have your children ever heard you pray? Mothers, did you ever take those litle ones aside and pray with them in the closet? In the judgment day, when the sheep are on the right and the goats are on the left, will your child point a finger at you, mother or father, and say, "I never heard you pray. You never taught me how to pray, and now I am lost." God help you, mothers and fathers, to pray with your children! How can you have a mother's heart and influence, how can you occupy the position of a mother, and not take those darling little ones to God and pray with them and for them? Nothing on earth should be accounted so high and sweet a privilege as to take your own darling little child and kneel down with it and put your hands upon its head and pray for it where nobody but the child and you and God can hear. I would

thank God for the privilege of doing such a thing as that.

May I give you an illustration from my own childhood experience? My father always had a family altar, but in addition to that, from the time that I could talk my mother taught me to lisp the name of Jesus. She taught me the Lord's Prayer, and that other little prayer which we have all learned, "Now I lay me down to sleep." But in addition to that she used to take me into the private chamber, close the door, kneel down with me by the bedside, put her hand on my head—I can feel that hand there to-day—and pray for me in an audible voice. She prayed with me, and taught me how to pray. I remember she taught me this prayer: "Lord, give me a pure heart. Lord, help me to love thee and to serve thee. Lord, keep me close to thee." I have prayed it a thousand times. I expect to pray it till I go up yonder where prayers shall end in praise and hope in sight.

Finally, I want to speak of a mother who influenced her child by her faith. This was Eunice, the mother of Timothy. 2 Tim. i. 5: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." This mother reared her son with unfeigned faith in God and in his promises, and the child grew into a godly man and a faithful minister. Here is an example for every loving and faithful mother. Bring up your children with

unfeigned and unwavering faith in God, in his word and his promises. Here is what God says to you, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Put unwavering faith in that promise. Bring up your children in that way, and when, like Jochebed, you have to send them forth, let your faith still be in God and he will keep them.

Now, in conclusion, let me tell you the story of a believing and praying mother to illustrate this idea of a mother's faith, and to show how God will honor such faith and bless the children therefor. Several years ago I held a meeting in a town in a South-western State. The events I am going to relate occurred a short time before I reached there. There was in that town a man and his wife and three little children. After a while the father died and the mother was left a widow. She was poor, living in a little rented house, and sewing for a living. Soon she was taken sick, and after a long illness it became evident that she was going to die. The physician was there and a few Christian men and women had gathered in. She said, "Call the children." They were brought in, and she took each little one by the hand and said, "Children, I am going to die to-day. I am poor, I have no home to leave you, no provisions, no money. I have nothing to leave you but God. I die with faith in him. He is the God of the covenant. I commit you, my little ones, into his hands. He will take care of you when mother is gone." And so she closed her eyes in death.

Now, the remarkable thing about this is that before that mother was laid in her grave, three of the best men in the town went to the house and each one took one of the little children, and adopting it into his family, and making it his own child; each of these children had as good a home as there was in the town.

Trust the God of the covenant. Mothers, fathers, commit your little ones to him and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and God will give you your reward here and hereafter.

LAYING UP RICHES.

"LAY not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."—Matt. vi. 19–21.

I want to call your attention to that first clause, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth." Will you please put the emphasis on *yourselves?* I want to talk to you this morning about laying up riches.

There is a very common mistake in the world, namely, that it is sinful to be rich. There is no harm in riches in themselves. There is no sin in being rich. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was perhaps the richest man of his day. Job, of whom God said, "He was a perfect man and upright, and one who eschewed evil," was the richest man in all the East. That disproves the idea that riches are necessarily wicked, and that it is sinful to be rich.

Another common idea is that there is a great deal of virtue in poverty. That, too, is a mistake.

There is no virtue whatever in being poor. Some of the meanest men I have ever seen were among the poorest. We are not necessarily made worse by our riches, or made better by our poverty. It is a fact that there are dangers connected with riches. There are dangers also connected with poverty. That verse in the thirtieth chapter of Proverbs has it about right—"Give me neither poverty nor riches."

Riches and the ability to make riches are gifts of God, just as much as ability to preach the gospel is an endowment. God has given to some men a preaching talent, and he will hold them accountable for their use or misuse of it. Just so, God has given you a money-making talent—a faculty that some men lack and can never acquire. Now, God is going to call you to account for the way in which you have used that talent, and also for the way in which you use or misuse the wealth that you accumulate by means of that talent. We are all "stewards of the mysteries of God." Some are stewards of the things of this world. One day all of us will have to give an account of our stewardship.

The chief object of the Bible reading this morning is to get you business men to take in the Bible idea of your stewardship as business men, as men who make and handle money.

There is another very common idea in the world, and a very mistaken one too. It is that business ought to be entirely separate from religion, and religion from business. If a business man adopts

that idea, and continues to live up to it long enough, having all business and no religion, he will land at last in hell. And if a religious man has the other idea, that you are to have all religion and give no attention to business, then he will land in the poor-house. Let us put it as God puts it, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." That is the Bible idea.

Again, there is an idea that you ought not to have any money matters at all connected with religious matters and church matters. You have heard the story of the aged sister who went to church one day and became happy with overpowering religious emotion. Just how in the world she managed to "get happy" I never could understand. But the story is that she did, and she said, "Thank God for a *free* salvation. I have belonged to the church fifteen years, and it has cost me but fifteen cents." There are people who think that all kinds of religious, and gospel, and missionary work ought to be carried on without any money at all. Now, lest some one might misunderstand what I here say, let me add that I have been an evangelist for seven years, and during that time I have never had any salary, or asked a mortal man for one nickel. I have never made money a consideration in any engagement to go to any place. I am going to preach the gospel. If I am supported it is all right. If I starve I believe I will go to heaven.

At the close of a camp-meeting a committee went around and made up some money for the evangelist. When this free-will offering was handed to the

preacher, a young man who was sitting by said, "Why, I thought you preached for souls, instead of money." The minister answered, "But I can't eat souls, and if I could it would take a dozen like yours to make a meal."

Pastors, missionaries, and evangelists can not eat souls. God's work can not be carried on in that way. The business steward and the spiritual steward should unite their energies for the glory of God and the good of souls. Sometime ago there were a number of men who proposed to put a fund of twenty-five thousand dollars at the disposal of Mr. Moody, to enable him and several other men that he might take with him, to go and evangelize the Indians. The matter was not consummated; but if the plan had been carried out, I hold that in the great day of final accounts the men who furnished the money that made the enterprise possible, would have had their full share of the reward.

The text says, "Lay not up *for yourselves.*" If it is no harm to be rich, why not lay up riches for yourselves? Because there are some very great dangers in such a selfish laying up of earthly treasures. One object of the Bible reading this morning is to point out the dangers that lie in the path of the man who is seeking wealth for himself and not for God. I will give you a few verses, each one of which will point out a specific danger.

Why should a man not lay up riches? I answer, first, because riches are very apt to make him *forget God.* Hear the Book. Luke xii. 19–21: "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much

goods laid up for many years; take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

There you have a case in point. There was a first-class, thorough-going business man. He was an agriculturist, and he did a legitimate business; no harm in it whatever. I have no doubt he was a sober, industrious, moral, upright, straightforward man. But he lost his soul. How? Because he was so occupied with his business, with his building new barns and tearing down old ones, in preparing to carry on all of his affairs and enlarge his business, that he forgot God. Hear what he says: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." He forgot God; and in that way he lost his soul.

That is the trouble about your riches, and about getting them, and keeping them after you get them. They are likely to make you forget God. You are so absorbed in your ledger that you forget to read your Bible; you are so absorbed and busy that you neglect to keep the commandments and the Sabbath. You forget to pray, you forget to prepare to meet God. You make no arrangements for eternity, and after a while you die in an unexpected hour, and your soul is eternally lost.

Here you are, a business man. You are so wrapped up in your business that you go out to the post-office Sunday morning and get your letters;

and then you go by the store and sit down in your office and read until time to go to church. You take no time for religious meditation or preparation for worship. So you have little interest in the services and get little profit. Then you spend all the afternoon in thinking how you will answer the letters the morning mail brought you. Thus you are not only desecrating God's day, but forgetting God and his commandments. You have no more right to give your time and thought to your mail and your business on Sunday than your neighbor has to spend the Sabbath in hoeing his corn. Or, perhaps you are a lawyer. You go to the post-office Sunday, and then go back and lock yourself up in your office, and spend the day in making up your briefs. You are working at a legitimate business, but at an illegitimate time. You are forgetting God.

Here is a man on a farm. He must have a little buggy riding; he wants to ride any how, so he goes out on Sunday to look over his farm, and to find out what he must do during the week. He maps out the whole week's work Sunday afternoon. What is he doing? He is forgetting God while laying up treasures for himself. Dear friend, do not let any business, however honorable and laudable in itself, crowd God out of your mind and heart. It will surely bring you trouble.

Another danger is that these riches laid up, and the laying of them up, may cause us to *reject Christ*. Hear the word, Matt. xix. 22: "But when the young man heard that saying, he went

away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." That was a very wealthy young man, who laid up great riches for himself. He was a good, moral, upright young man, and we are told that Jesus loved him. That is, there was something peculiarly lovable about the young man. He came to Christ and said, "What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He wanted to be saved. Christ knew where the trouble was, and that his heart was all absorbed in his riches and set on them, and he said, "Go, and sell what you have, and give to the poor, and come and follow me." Thus the issue was squarely joined between God on the one hand and the man's riches on the other. When this dilemma was presented what did the young man do? He rejected Christ, and held on to his riches, and went away sorrowful. How many are doing that to-day! Those New York pastors will tell you how hard it is to reach many of the millionaires on Fifth Avenue, who have all that money can procure, all that heart can wish, faring sumptuously every day. Talk to such men about self-denial, about following the meek and lowly Jesus, about coming out for Christ and taking a stand with him, and you will find it as hard to reach them as men in China and Japan. Here is a man who has all that he wants, all that earth can give him. He can take his sea-voyages, and travel to the ends of the earth. He can live as he wishes, gratifying every desire and every whim. Talk to that man about self-denial; he is not going to hear or heed you. My experience

and observation is that the hardest people in this world to reach are those that are so full of their good things that they think there is nothing better. Dear brother, be careful; you can not serve God and mammon. Many a man has rejected Christ for mammon. This is peculiarly the temptation of the rich.

Another danger is that riches laid up for ourselves may *choke the Scriptures*. Matt. xiii. 22: "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful."

You very often choke God's word by the way in which you accumulate your riches, by the way in which you use them, and by the way in which you distribute them. What does God say about that? "Provide things *honest* in the sight of all men." How do some men secure their riches? They catch a man in trouble and rob him by extortionate rates of interest or extortionate prices; they take a mortgage on his farm or his crop and enforce the mortgage.

Some men want to accumulate wealth by dealing in lottery tickets. You can't buy lottery tickets and be an honest man. If you are successful you get something without giving value received. Whether you win or lose somebody is robbed and somebody gets something for nothing. Therefore it is a dishonest transaction. Again, some men deal in futures—wheat, cotton, tobacco, coffee, sugar—all sort of futures. You can't do that

without choking the word. It is gambling, nothing else.

It is hard to lay up those riches and not let them gain your heart and your affection. Hear what the Bible says, "No covetous man, who is an idolater, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Whenever you love your riches better than you love God, you are an idolater and are choking God's word. The Bible teaches, furthermore, that we should honor God with our substance. And to those who failed to do this it was said, "Ye have robbed me in that ye have not brought the tithes into my storehouse."

There is only one way to get riches and at the same time not interfere with your spiritual life, and that is to make the outflow of your wealth proportionate to the inflow. Hence, God instituted the tithe system. Let a man pay the tenth of his income to the cause of God and humanity, and he may grow as rich as Abraham, and like Abraham he will be kept from becoming sordid or covetous. But some man answers, "All that tithing business was done away with when the ceremonial law was abolished." No, sir. The tithing system was instituted before the ceremonial law, and it was not abrogated by the ceremonial law, nor did Christ abrogate it. He said to the Pharisees, "That ye ought to have done, but ought not to have left the weightier matters of the law undone."

May I give you just a little personal experience? I mention it to honor God and to show you that I am not discussing a theory but a practical rule

of life. It has been my rule for years, and I am going to keep it up till I die. For years I have kept one of these little toy banks, and if I receive ten dollars I put one dollar into this bank; if I receive a hundred dollars I put ten into it. That is God's bank and God's money. I take part of that money to buy tracts for gratuitous distribution; some of it I send to a missionary; some to a widow or orphan, or to help build a church, or to assist some other needy cause or person. That is God's money, and must go to his cause and kingdom. And let me use a strong expression—I would as soon put my hand in my neighbor's pocket and take out a dollar and put into mine, as to receive ten dollars and not put one into the Lord's bank. I have found it a means of grace to my soul, and I thank God for it. I find I can live on the nine tenths *with* God's blessing better than on the ten tenths *without* it. I hear somebody say, "Don't the Bible say, Let not your right hand know what your left hand doeth?" That is about alms and not about tithes, paying tithes is a requirement, giving alms is a voluntary offering.

Here is where the hitch comes in the management of ecclesiastical affairs. Why is it so much trouble to raise the pastor's salary, to pay the incidental expenses of the church, and to get money to meet all the great obligations resting on God's people? Christians are not paying the *tithe of their income* into God's house, and the wheels of Zion are clogged. And what does the church

have to do? It has to resort to these abominable bazaars, church suppers, raffles, and every conceivable abomination of that kind, all of them absolutely unscriptural. There have been church suppers at which the most beautiful young lady in town dished out about two spoonfuls of ice-cream with a little piece of cake and charged a sinner fifty cents, and when he handed her a two dollar bill she put it in her pocket, saying, "We don't make any change here." That is bringing God's cause into disrepute. The whole principle is wrong. God's cause is not a pauper's cause, let it stand on its merits and let every man that belongs to the church lay aside the tenth of his income for the work of the Master. Then the wheels of Zion will be oiled. You will have no more trouble about church finances. You will hear no more sarcastic sneers at the church of God. Dear saints, we must honor God with our substance. Only thus can we keep from choking the Scriptures in their teaching on this subject.

Again, laying up riches for ourselves *endangers heaven*—that is, it may cause you to miss heaven. Matt. xix. 23: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." What does that mean? "A rich man shall hardly"—that is, with difficulty—get into the kingdom. Does that mean that it is any harder for God to save a rich man than a poor man? No. Does it mean that a rich man is any meaner than a poor man? No. What does it mean? It means ex-

actly this that riches laid up for one's self are likely to make a man forget God and reject Christ; likely to choke the word in his heart. What is the inevitable result? It is a very difficult thing for such a man to get to heaven. It is very difficult to lay up riches for yourself and not let them absorb your attention, your heart, your soul.

Another danger is that riches laid up selfishly will *drown men in perdition.* 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

"They that *will* be rich"—that is, they that adopt the motto of the grasping father who sent his son out into the world with this charge: "You are twenty-one, you are starting in life. Now, make money; honestly, if you can, but—make money!" The idea was, be rich at all hazards. That is the impelling motive with many to-day. They make up their minds that they *will* be rich, regardless of consequences.

Let us look at some of the manifestations of that evil determination to be rich at any cost. Do you know that Americans have already obtained a world-wide reputation as a nation of gamblers? We gamble in futures, on horse-races, cards, presidential and every other kind of elections. We will be rich. What is the result? Our young men

have caught the infection, and they are on a break-neck race after wealth. So we read constantly about embezzlements and defaulting bank cashiers and bank presidents, about the misuse of money by treasurers and officials. How many men, honored in church and society, have found their way from high positions of trust to disgrace and prison! Men *will* be rich. And they drown themselves in perdition and pierce themselves through with many sorrows. We are to a great extent a nation, not only of gamblers, but of idolaters. We have made up our minds to be rich; God is forgotten and his word is choked, set entirely aside, and we have pierced ourselves through with many sorrows. We have erred from the faith, and how many have drowned themselves in social, personal, moral, and eternal perdition!

Young men, let me give you one word of advice this morning. It is a great deal better to be willing to marry a plain, simple girl that will help you live a domestic life and to have a quiet little home; to work with your hands for an honest living; to rear your family for God, laying up treasures in heaven; to live and die a well-to-do, respectable, honorable citizen, and at last go to heaven, than to start out in this high, fast line of speculation, gambling, and trickery, forgetting God and choking God's word. You may perhaps make a fortune in speculation by the time you are forty, and then die with softening of the brain, and go down to hell. Dear young man, the other is a great deal better policy. May God help you.

You older men, and middle aged men, who are striving to lay up riches, forgetting God, and choking the word, for what or for whom are you laying up these treasures? You say, "For my children. I want my son to have twenty-five thousand dollars when he is twenty-one." Yes, and perhaps you have not brought that boy up with sound business habits, and when he is twenty-one, and you give him twenty-five thousand dollars, he will not know what a dollar is worth. He has no business habits, and perhaps in five years he will squander it all in some foolish and reckless enterprise. And then he will be bankrupt, indeed, with no money, no business habits; and, perhaps, disgraced for life. Bring up your boy with correct ideas of honesty, with business habits and sound moral training, and when he is twenty-one, if he is worth any thing he will make his way in the world, and if he is not, he would waste all the money you could give him.

Suppose you say, "I am laying up riches for my daughter." About your daughter, I would advise you to bring her up to be a sensible, domestic young woman, not ashamed and not afraid to work, with some idea in her head above fashion and society. Give her a competency? Yes. But suppose you leave her with a great fortune. About the time that you are dead, along comes one of these sleek, kid-gloved, diamond-studded, patent-leather-shoed adventurers, seeking to mend his worldly prospects. He gets your girl and your money, and she probably dies of a broken heart.

You would better teach your daughters more common sense, more industry, and spend less time in this wild chase for money.

Another peculiarity about riches is that they *fade away.* James i. 11: "For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth; so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways."

Riches take unto themselves wings and fly away. I do not know how it is here in South Caroiina, but I know in my own native State, Mississippi, many heaped up wealth before the war, and some of them since, and it made to itself wings and flew away. Several years ago I went down to Vicksburg, Miss., to hold a meeting, in January. There had been an unusually heavy snow; and the people had rolled up great snow-balls, and made snow-men, and snow-houses. About twelve o'clock the sun came out bright and warm, and by night all these snow treasures were melted away. All had vanished forever from sight. So your stock exchange and your merchants' exchange, your bankers and men of business, are all a lot of big boys, rolling up bank shares instead of snow-balls, and after a while the sun will rise with burning heat, and your earthly riches will melt and vanish; your life squandered, and your money gone, hell will be your portion. Lay up your treasures at God's right hand, "an inheritance that fadeth not away."

But another trouble about riches is that they *satisfy not.* Eccl. v. 10: "He that loveth silver shall

not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase; this is also vanity."

Dear friend, that silver can not satisfy the wants of your heart, nor of your body or soul. The more a man gets of these things the more he wants.

They can not satisfy even the wants of your body in this life. There was a certain wealthy woman in New York, a member of one of the great millionaire families, that paid $7,000 a year for a French cook, and then she could only eat a hoe-cake and drink sweet milk. I can enjoy more than that. With all of her wealth she was unsatisfied. Another of New York's millionaires said just a short time before he died, "O that I could digest one good meal and get one night's sound sleep." We, though poor, can enjoy what all this man's wealth could not buy. And when you come to talk about the conscience and the heart and the soul and the inward yearning for salvation and eternal life, dear dying man, riches can not satisfy these. Therefore God says, "Why spend your money for that which satisfies not and your labor for that which is not bread?"

Another trouble about laying up riches for yourselves is that they *profit not in the day of wrath.* Prov. xi. 4: "Riches profit not in the day of wrath."

There was a certain rich man that died, and when he was dying he said, "Save me, doctor; save me! There are two trunks of money under the bed, and plenty in the bank. Save me!" But his money could not save him, and his money

could not profit him; and, dear dying man, what will your riches profit you in the day of wrath? When your naked soul stands before the all-searching eye of the omnipotent God, what will all you have heaped up and hoarded profit you? If you lay up treasures for yourself and forget God and reject Christ, what will be the result? In the first place, you lose your money, for you can't carry it with you, and in the next place you lose your soul. Hence, the Savior asks, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" You lose both your soul and the world. Dear friend, give your heart to God; seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these other things shall be added unto you.

Another reason why we should not lay up riches for ourselves is that they *rust and they canker.* James v. 1–3: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." Now what about this canker, this rust? When you stand before Almighty God, it will eat your flesh as the fire. What do the rust and canker prove? That you have not been a faithful steward of the treasure that God has committed to your keeping; you have not turned it over; you have hoarded it and stored it away, and have not been using it for God's glory and the good of the

world and the advancement of God's kingdom. Therefore it has rusted and cankered, and this very rust and canker will condemn you at God's bar; will eat your flesh as rust in iron.

How did you lay up your earthly treasure? Keep that question in view. Did you grind the poor, by shaving notes. Did you exact extortionate interest when you caught your neighbor in financial distress? Did you lay up riches by dishonesty or deception, by having a yard-stick thirty-five inches long, by sharp practice, by keeping back part of the truth? If so your money will rust, it will canker in that day. Did you prosper by oppressing the poor? If so, may God help you. Your gold will rust and canker; it will eat your flesh as doth a fire. I think it is about this way: When a man stands at the judgment bar of God and looks back upon a lost life-time and a lost world, when he sees the work that might have been done, the good that was within his reach, the churches that might have been built, the missionaries that might have been sent to teach the heathen in foreign lands, the millions that might have been saved; he then takes in the thought, "Instead of doing that, I hoarded, I buried my wealth, it is rusted and cankered; and now, I have not only been an unfaithful steward, I have not only done what I ought *not* to have done with my money, I not only have no profits left but I have lost my soul in the bargain. And here is the miserable rust and canker eating my flesh as it were a fire."

It is a privilege to live,

> "For the right that needs assistance,
> For the wrong that needs resistance,
> And the heaven that smiles above us,
> And the good that we can do."

When we see a man with all these grand possibilities around him, living a sordid, miserly life, his only object the acquiring and hoarding of wealth, we are amazed at such prostitution of God-given faculties and opportunities. Money, like any other blessing of God, may be a means of grace, and a power for good. Other things being equal, the more money a man has the more good he can do in this world. Here is a man who is good, godly, and devout, but having no wealth he can not do very much for the world or for mankind, while another, also honest, faithful, but no better, being a man of means, can do a great deal more; and God will hold him to account for what he has ability to do.

Finally, we have this exhortation from 1 Tim. vi. 11: "But thou, O man of God, *flee these things* and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." This applies not simply to the preacher, but to every child of God. Let every one flee these things which lead to forgetting God, to rejecting Christ; which choke the word and endanger heaven; which drown men in perdition, which at their best fade away and satisfy not, and at the last rust and canker and eat our flesh as doth a fire.

FORGIVING ENEMIES.

OUR topic is the Forgiveness of Enemies. I want to ask three questions and let God's word answer them. First, What is required of us concerning our enemies? Second, Why is this required of us? Third, Have we any example of perfect obedience to this requirement? We have a number of verses under each of these heads. It is not a question of opinion; it is not a question of intepretation; it is not a question of what men may think; but a question of what God says. God's word is to be the rule of faith and practice on this as well as on other subjects.

Very few, if any, of us go through this world without some collision of opinion, interest, or feeling with others; and very few pass through life without having, at some time or other, at least a temporary animosity, and a temporary, if not a permanent, enemy. Now, what does God teach us concerning our enemies? I answer, first, he requires that we *forgive them.* Mark xi. 25: "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if he have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive your trespasses." That is a plain, straightforward, unequivocal command. "When you stand praying, forgive"—not when

you stand praying God to forgive you, but when you pray to God for any thing, or about any thing, the first thing that you are to do is to forgive. Forgive any and all who have trespassed against you; who have wronged you or, in any way, whether rightly or wrongly, incurred your animosity or ill-will. Mark it: there is not an "if," there is not an "and," there is not a condition, there is not an hypothesis connected with that requirement. It is a plain, unequivocal, direct, specific command of God, Forgive.

I hear some man say, "Do you mean I am to forgive that man who cheated me, that man who swore a lie against me, that man who slandered me in the last campaign, that man who traduced my character? Do you mean to say that I am to forgive him?" God says so. "But," you answer, "I will forgive him if he is worthy to be forgiven." God does not say any thing about his worthiness. On that basis I would like to know how you would ever get pardon for your meanness; and get God to forgive your sins. That man is as worthy of your forgiveness as you are of God's. On the score of worthiness you would shut yourself out of heaven. If you accept God's plan, so far as your own forgiveness is concerned, you must accept it concerning the forgiveness of your enemies.

But some one replies, "I would forgive him if he would come half way." God does not say any thing about coming half way. Another says, "I would forgive him if he would ask me to forgive him." But God does not hinge your duty upon

another man's conduct. You are to forgive whether he ought to be forgiven or not; whether he asks to be forgiven or not; and whether he comes half way or not. You are to do what God says and let the consequences take care of themselves. There is no escaping the conclusion unless you repudiate God's holy word. If you do that I have nothing more to say. My business is to give you God's word, pure and simple and unadulterated; men can receive it or reject it. The responsibility for its reception is with them; my responsibility ends with giving God's message; and, he being my helper, I will deliver his message faithfully. What are you going to do about it? Some one answers, "I am not going to forgive that man or woman that did me such injustice and wrong." Very well; we will find a verse directly that will tell what will become of you if you do not. Did you notice that verse? Forgive, *in order that your Father in heaven may* also forgive you.

Another thing that God requires of us concerning our enemies is this: that we be *reconciled unto them*. Matt. v. 23, 24: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Here is a man coming to the altar of prayer, the altar of worship, of communion with God. Now, if any man have aught against him, if there is any thing of animosity, or revenge, or unforgiveness, or unkindness, or misunderstanding

between him and his fellow-man, what is he to do? He is to go first and be reconciled to that man. I tell you Christ meant something when he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Go and be reconciled. I hear some man say, "But here is a man not willing to be reconciled; he will not be reconciled." Have you done what God tells you to do? Your duty is to make an honest, faithful effort to be reconciled. If you have done this and the man is still stubborn and unreasonable; if he will not listen to an honorable explanation or accept due satisfaction then you have done what God tells you to do, you have done your duty; you have made an honest effort at reconciliation. There is a reconciliation so far as you are concerned; there is an entire reconciliation so far as you can effect it; and therefore you have done right, and you stand clear before God, and the other man will have to settle with God for *his* part of the trouble.

How much better the world, the church, and society, would be if we followed the plain, simple instruction of Christ in matters of this kind. A great deal of the bickering and the strife and animosity between man and man, between families, in churches, in communities and even in nations arises out of a misconception of something, based perhaps on a misunderstanding or an erroneous conclusion jumped at, or on an unfounded rumor, or a false construction that some mischief-making

person has put upon something that was said or done.

Suppose Smith hears that Jones is angry with him, stirred up and full of ill-will. Now, suppose he goes to Jones and says, "Look here, I understand you are angry with me." "Yes, I am." "I understand that you heard so and so." "Yes, I did." "Now, let me tell you; here is what I said, and this is what I meant. Somebody has gone to you and changed the verbiage a little; colored the idea a little; and you have a wrong conception of what I said and of what I meant." If the other is an honorable and fair and upright man he will say, "Now I see it in its true light. If that is all you said and all you meant, then I forgive, and there is nothing of it, and we are just as we were before." Now, that is what Jesus Christ means. Has any body any thing against you? Does any body misunderstand you? Don't go about sulking? Do not tattle to your neighbors about it. Go straight to the person who is offended, and, like an honest man, make an honest statement of the truth; and if the thing can be settled you will settle it that way, and if it can not be settled you will have done your duty.

But a great many good people, and sometimes Christian people, take a very different course. One hears what such a person said about him, and instead of going to the person and asking him about it, and ascertaining if he did say it, and requesting an explanation, he jumps to a conclusion, and listens to the long-tongued tattlers that brought this

information and misrepresented facts. Then he magnifies the story and says a great many things himself, and strikes back. I hardly know what to call the tale-bearers that carry such stories back and forth. You know Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," describes the progeny of the devil and sin as "hell-hounds." I have thought if there is any thing in this world that Milton's hell-hounds correspond to it is these tattling, gossiping people that will, when they hear any body say any thing, or see somebody do something, go straight to the person spoken about, or interested, and repeat the story, and add to it and put a false color on it. Nor do they stop there, but they wait to hear what the person to whom they bring the news will say, and then they take the report back and hand it over. I say if such tale-bearers do not correspond to Milton's hell-hounds I know nothing in humanity that does. Thus mischief-making stories are kept going. Neighbor is stirred up against neighbor; brother is angry with brother. When they meet on the street they avoid each other and refuse to speak. The devil gets the better of them; the fire of indignation and wrath and perdition is stirred up in their hearts. There is a hopeless feud, ending perhaps in bloodshed. Dear friends, would it not be a great deal better for us in this world, and the world to come, if we would obey the teachings of God's word. Be reconciled, or make an honest effort.

I imagine I hear some one asking a very pertinent question: "Suppose somebody takes up a foolish, nonsensical notion, and out of that imagines

that he has something against you; are you to go around and try to correct every whimsical idea that some foolishly sensitive or sentimental person may have?" No; God's word was never intended to be applied to nonsensical things, to silly imaginations. It says, "If thy brother *have* aught against thee"—that is, if he really has some cause of offense against you, not if he simply *imagines* some vain, delusive, absurd thing.

Let us go a step farther. Another thing that the Bible enjoins upon us is that we *speak no evil* of our enemies. Titus iii. 2: "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men." My friends, that is something this world would do well to heed. Some people think that if they have an enemy they have an express permit to reproach and villify him as much as they please. If somebody has lied about them, or stolen from them, or defrauded them, or become their enemy in any way, they think they have a right to abuse and revile that person on all occasions. It is a great mistake. God's word for it, you have no right to speak evil of that man who has slandered you or burned your house. You have a right to speak the *facts;* you have a right to come into town and report it to the legal authorities, but you have not a right to speak evil of a man unless you are speaking facts in order that law and justice may be vindicated and a guilty man punished. There is a great deal of difference between speaking facts about an evil man and speaking evil rumors about a man.

Here is one of the meanest things in the world: If you hear a vague rumor about some man, or a vague rumor about your enemy, to go and retail that rumor. A story gets into the newspaper, perhaps, about some Christian, a pastor it may be, or an evangelist; or about a politician, or any body else. It is a mean thing to be repeating such a rumor. It is a violation of the Scripture, whether the evil report is about an enemy or about any other man. "Speak evil of no man." You have no right to speak evil even of your enemies.

Another duty we owe our enemies is to *pray for them.* Matt. v. 44: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." That is what God says you are to do. "Pray for them"—not with a kind of ritualistic reading off of prayer for the wicked and the godless and the vile in a sort of general way, but pray specifically, directly, personally, for them that hate you and despitefully use you and persecute you. Think of the person in all the world that you have most reason to hate, and pray for him.

Another thing required of us concerning our enemies is to *feed them.* Rom. xii. 20: "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." This does not mean that you are to *support* your enemy and his wife and children. Your enemy ought to make an honest living for himself. But if through misfortune your enemy is

in absolute want it is your duty to feed him; it is your duty to divide your meat and bread with him.

Suppose that a man in this town is your avowed and bitter personal enemy. He has a little home down the street. Suppose he sells whatever other property he has, puts all the money in his pocket, and goes home and retires at night with his wife and his little ones. In the night his house takes fire and burns down over their heads. He and his wife and children just barely escape with their lives. They have no money, no house, nothing to eat. Now would you go and buy provisions and clothing and send them to that man? That would be practical godliness. Would you help that man and his family in their distress? Would you show sympathy and try to do them good? "No," says some man, "I would not do it." If you would not your heart is not right with God. The devil, I suppose, would not do it either.

But another thing that is required of us—and it is perhaps the hardest requirement of all—is that we are to *love our enemies*. Matt. v. 44: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." "Ah," says some man, "I can't do that." I know, by yourself, in your own strength, you can not; I know that your wicked, deceitful heart can not; neither can mine; but by God's grace you can. God says, "My grace is sufficient for you," and he never gives a command without giving grace to obey. A regenerated man, in whose heart is shed

abroad the love of God by the Holy Ghost, can love his enemies; and if he is soundly converted he will love them. It does not say you are to love your enemies' *ways*. Your enemy may be a thief, you are not to love his thefts; your enemy may be a liar, you are not to love his lying; your enemy may be a drunkard, you are not to love his drunkenness. But you are to love *him*, his soul; his spiritual and eternal welfare is to be near your heart.

You have a child who is naughty; perhaps you would not admit it but some people know it. Sometimes he tells an untruth, sometimes he disobeys you, sometimes he acts very unbecomingly. You do not love these ugly short-comings in your child, but you love the child. Just so with us. God does not love our abominable sins; he hates them. But over and above and beyond and back of our sins he loves us. He loved us while we were dead in trespasses and in sins, and at enmity with God. God loves us, and requires us to love our enemies.

Just here is one of the strongest arguments for the divinity of Christ. His is the only religion that requires men to love their enemies. What did Mohammedanism say? Take a sword in one hand and the Koran in the other. Christianity says, "Love your enemies." It is not only the only religion that requires this, but it is the only religion that can enable mankind to do it.

Now, let us consider the second question: Why are these things required of us? In common law there is always a reason that lies under every law. Just so there is a reason beneath every command

and requirement in God's Book. Now, why does God require us to forgive, to be reconciled to our enemies, and to speak no evil? He gives the reasons in his word.

First, God requires these things at our hands that our *prayers may not be hindered* in the securing of that for which we pray. Hear the Book, Matt. v. 23, 24: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Here a man goes to the altar of prayer to ask for a blessing. God says, "Stop, go first and be reconciled to your brother." Why? In order that the man's prayers may be heard, that his gift may be accepted. A man comes to the altar of prayer and in his heart is a spirit of animosity, a spirit of revenge, a spirit of rankling hatred against somebody. What will such a spirit in him do? It will quench the Spirit of God; it will hinder the fervor and earnestness of his prayer, it will hinder the accomplishment of his prayer. While the man is thus living in disobedience to what God requires he can not be blessed. God wants you to go and be reconciled. He wants to hear your prayer, he wants to give his children what they need. But his children must do right, and they must be right; and they can not be right with these unforgiving thoughts and feelings in mind and heart.

This brings us to a very practical question. Here are many church members. For a long time some

of you may have been at enmity with somebody in town. You have been indulging in very unkind and unforgiving feelings. What has been the result? Your prayers have been hindered, your spirituality has been chilled, your communion with God has been interrupted. There may be many reasons for your spiritual coldness and deadness, but this is one, and if there were no other it alone would be sufficient. Now, go and do what God tells you to do; make an honest effort to get right with your enemy, and then come back and you will be in a proper frame of mind to pray. Your heart must be right with your fellow-man and with your God, and then God will hear and answer your prayer. The devil understands human nature, and he knows what is involved in this matter. He does all he can to keep up this spirit of revenge, animosity, and relentlessness. Why? He wants to hinder your prayer and communion with God, and to check and dwarf your spiritual growth. But God, for the opposite reason, wants you to forgive. Now, shall we Christians follow the guidance of our loving heavenly Father, who wants us to do the things that will prepare us to love him more and serve him better; or shall we obey the devil, and follow his suggestions, choosing the very things that will cloud our souls, interfere with our communion, and separate us from the enjoyment of God's love? This world can do as it will, but by God's grace I will forgive any thing, every thing, for I want to live in communion with God, and abide in fellowship with Christ, and I will not, God's grace helping me, let the

world, the flesh or the devil interfere. Christ-like, Holy-Ghost godliness goes right along forgiving enemies.

Another reason why we are required to forgive our enemies is that *we ourselves may be forgiven.* Mark xi. 26: "But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." That is one of the most searching passages in God's truth. Now, some of you said in your hearts a while ago, "I am not going to forgive my enemy." Stick to that and you will never enter heaven. You refuse to forgive your enemy and God says in his word he will not forgive you; he can not forgive you and be consistent. To refuse to forgive is rebellion against God; it is a violation of the statute of the Almighty—deliberate disobedience. Do you expect God to forgive and save you while you are living in known, willful disobedience to his word? Not only do you forfeit forgiveness by your disobedience and rebellion, but your unforgiving, revengeful state of mind unfits you to receive Jesus Christ. You can not trust Christ nor be saved.

Another reason why you should show mercy to others is that you *yourself may obtain mercy.* Matt. v. 7: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." An unforgiving spirit is an unmerciful spirit; it is an unChrist-like, a satanic spirit. Jesus Christ forgave his bitterest, deadliest enemies, even those that crucified him. Therefore forgiveness is Christ-like, and God says if you have not the spirit of Christ you are none of his. Do not tell me you

are a saint, and that your name is written in the book of life, if you are not willing to forgive. It is not Satan's nature to forgive. Revenge, animosity, and hatred are the quintessence of the spirit of the devil; therefore—I will use strong language—if you will not forgive, if you persist in an unforgiving spirit, you are devil-possessed. Why? We are told that the devil entered into Judas Iscariot and he sold the Son of God, and the devil enters into that man who has this rankling, unforgiving spirit and will not give it up.

In the next place, we ought to forgive our enemies *in order that we may be the children of God.* Matt. v. 45: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Now, notice the connection. I will repeat the 44th verse, which was read a while ago: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Then follows this 45th verse: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." Now, you see the argument is based on the conduct of our heavenly Father. Does he not feed his enemies? Yes. Does he not love his enemies and do good to them? Yes. Now, if you are going to be like that Father, you must have enough of the parental likeness to do to your enemies what your Father does. There is no higher proof that we are the children of the heavenly Father who loves and

feeds his enemies, and sends the rain and sunshine upon his enemies, than that we do to our enemies as God here commands us to do.

Now, we come to the third and last question, Have we any example of obedience to this divine rule? Somebody says, "That is a very fine theory you are presenting this morning." Yes; it is fine because it is God's theory. But I hear a man say, "But is it practical? Can the thing be done? Have we an example of obedience to this gospel law of forgiveness?" Yes, thank God, we have. It is found in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our great exemplar. In his footsteps God tells us we are to follow.

Now let us read Luke xxiii. 34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment and cast lots." This shows us Jesus Christ doing just what we have been teaching that you ought to do—loving his enemies; giving his body, his life, the bread of heaven, for them. He was giving himself for these enemies, and there at the cross he prayed for them. You talk about how somebody has wronged and mistreated you, but no man or woman on earth ever treated you half as meanly and vilely as you have treated Almighty God Yet God is willing to forgive you, and Jesus Christ forgave those enemies of his who had treated him a thousand times worse than any enemies ever treated you. Now, if we have the spirit of Jesus we too can forgive; nay, if we have this spirit we will do it. And if we profess to be God's children and are not willing to

follow the example of the Lord Jesus there is something wrong. Christ not only preached this divine doctrine but he practiced it.

Again, Gal. ii. 20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Who is it that says this? It is Saul of Tarsus, one of the most bitter and violent enemies that Jesus Christ ever had. He stood there when they stoned Stephen, and he started down to Damascus to make havoc of God's church. What does this former persecutor say? "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Jesus loved even that arch enemy. He gave himself, gave his life; made an offering of himself for that arch enemy, Saul of Tarsus. That is the way Christ treated his enemies; if we are his disciples we will follow his example.

Let us read one other passage only. Col. iii. 13: "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you so also do ye." Now, mark it, Christ's manner of forgiving is to be the rule of our manner of forgiving. How did Christ forgive? Once for all, freely, heartily, fully, forever; and he says of our sins, "I will remember them no more."

But I hear some man or woman saying: "Well, I am willing to forgive, but I will never forget. I can't forget it. I don't want him to come about me.

I don't want to have any thing to do with him. I will never forget." Such forgiveness is not worth the time it takes to tell about it. No, Christ never forgave any body that way. Suppose Christ should bestow that sort of forgiveness on you. After a while you die, and you knock at the pearly gates and the angel comes to see who you are. He goes back and says, "Mr. So-and-So is at the gate and wants to come in." The Lord Jesus answers, "Yes, I forgave him, but I have not forgotten his iniquity. I don't want to see any thing of him. I don't want him to come about me. I shall have nothing to do with him." Would not that shut you out of heaven? How much would that sort of forgiveness amount to?

Now, Christ forgives freely. He takes us to his bosom and to his heart. If you do not forgive so freely that you are willing to let by-gones, in every sense of the word, be by-gones, your forgiveness is worth nothing. Of course you can't obliterate the fact or expunge the impression from your brain, but you can forget it so that it will not affect your love, or your kindness, or your good-will. That is what God requires of us.

I want to read this last verse, Matt. xviii. 35: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

"AND I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."—John xiv. 16, 17.

The topic of our Bible reading this morning is, "The Work of the Holy Spirit." The work of the Father was to devise the plan of redemption, the work of the Son was to finish that plan. Hence, Jesus said, "It is expedient for you that I go away"—that is, I have now finished my work on earth, I will ascend up to my Father, and "if I go away I will send the Comforter unto you." Then the Holy Ghost was sent by the Father and the Son to take the things of Christ and show them unto us, to make this plan of salvation efficacious unto every one who will accept it, and leave every one without excuse who does not accept it.

Now, we want to study the work of the Spirit this morning, especially in relation to God's people; also in relation to the unsaved. We do not give as much attention and study as we should to

the teachings of the Bible about the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we do not preach enough on this subject. It is a great and glorious truth that we can not be saved without Jesus; it is also a great and glorious truth that we can not be saved without the Holy Ghost. Jesus said, "No man can come unto me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him." How does the Father draw men unto Christ? He draws them by the Holy Ghost, and all who yield to his influence are brought to the Son of God; while all who resist and continue to reject his influence are left to themselves, and then they are doomed and damned.

I am going to give you twelve verses of scripture, each one of which presents a specific work of the Holy Spirit. Before we proceed let us understand that if we are going to be honored by the Holy Spirit in our work for God, in our testimony for Christ, in our effort to win souls, we must honor the Holy Spirit. An intelligent pastor once said to Mr. Moody, "I am a man, I think, of ordinary common sense; I have a collegiate education, and I have devoted myself exclusively to the work of the ministry. Will you please tell me why it is that I have not been more used by God in my work?" Mr. Moody answered, "I have no doubt the great secret of the matter is, you have not honored the Holy Ghost as you should have done." Dear friends, if we ignore God's Spirit our work will be lifeless and without fruit.

The first work of the Holy Spirit is to *testify of Christ.* John xv. 26: "But when the Comforter

is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." Now, Christ came and finished the plan of redemption, and ascended up to his heavenly Father. The Holy Ghost comes, especially in this age and dispensation of the Spirit, to take the things of Christ and show them unto mankind, to take this atoning blood and apply it unto men—to make this plan of salvation efficacious. His great work, therefore, is to testify of Jesus, to testify through this written word. The scripture came not by the will of man, but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The work of the same Holy Ghost now is to testify directly to the heart and conscience and souls of men about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is a very vital question: Why is it so necessary for the evangelist, pastor, Sabbath-school teacher, or missionary—every Christian worker—to teach and to preach God's written word? Because it is by such teaching that Jesus Christ is revealed; because it is the work of the Holy Ghost to testify of Jesus Christ through such teaching.

This brings us to a very vital truth which comes close to me and to these pastors; it will come close to any man or woman who is going to be a worker for God. It is this: If we expect to be honored by the Holy Ghost in winning souls to Christ, in feeding Christ's sheep and his lambs, we must let scientific philosophy and speculative theories alone. We must let mere moral essays and rose-water dis-

courses, mere dealing with ethical questions, alone. We must give up preaching about the last big fire in New York or London, and the last great effort to reconcile Genesis and geology. Such discourses are very good in their place, but their place is not in the pulpit if they crowd out the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must let these things alone. In order that our work may be honored by the Holy Ghost we must make Jesus Christ, the Son of God crucified on the cross, the great burden of our preaching. That must be the warp and the woof of all of our instructions. All else—science, philosophy, rhetoric and poetry—must be used merely as incidental things, to illustrate, and enforce some great central principle of gospel truth. The work of the Holy Ghost is to testify of Christ, he is therefore to co-operate with the preacher; but when the preacher, or the teacher, or the missionary, sets Jesus Christ aside, and substitutes science and poetry and rhetoric, or philosophy and ethics, in the place of Jesus Christ, then the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with him or his preaching. When Jesus is set aside the Holy Ghost and the preacher have nothing in common.

This is a solemn truth; a fundamental principle. Therefore let us who are going to preach the gospel lay all of these other things aside, keep them in the background. Like the great apostle let us say from the depths of our hearts, "I am determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Our business is to hold up Christ, and when we do it in all faith-

fulness, tenderness, love, and truth, the Holy Ghost will help us, will testify through us, will honor our message, will make us a mighty power. He will enable us to win souls to the Lord Jesus Christ.

But it takes grace to lay aside all of these things that are popular with the great mass of the unconverted world, and to stand up with Paul and say, "I am not ashamed to preach the gospel." What did Paul mean by that? He meant simply that he was not ashamed to stand up and talk about a crucified Savior instead of talking about the great Greek philosophies, about science, and the other popular themes of that day. Are you ashamed to preach the gospel, pure and simple, the old-fashioned, straightforward, unadulterated gospel? Are you ashamed to tell the old, old story of the Cross? It is a great victory for a preacher when he stands by the cross of Christ and says, "I do not care what the world thinks about my rhetoric, my poetry, my philosophy, my science. I do not care what people think of me as a preacher. Let them call me big or little, if only they think more of Jesus Christ whom I preach."

Another work of the Holy Spirit is to *witness with us that we are God's children.* Rom. viii. 16: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." We accept Christ as our Savior, we accept him by faith; and what follows? The Spirit of God comes and bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. The Holy Spirit is a personality. Therefore, when we accept Christ and are born of God,

the Holy Spirit comes and bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God. We have thus the testimony of an infallible witness. The Holy Ghost can not testify to a falsehood. When he bears witness in your soul that you are one of God's saints, what higher evidence could there be to settle the question? There could be no more infallible assurance.

I have heard some people speak this way, and I know there are many Sunday-school teachers who have this idea: "I think it is presumptuous for any body to say he knows that he is a child of God." On the contrary, it is presumptuous for a man, who has the witness of the Spirit of God testifying to his spirit that he is a child of God, to say he does not know whether he is a Christian or not; or to say he does not think any body can know. It is a great mistake. We have two witnesses to assure us that we are God's children. One is the written word. 1 John v. 13: "These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know that ye have eternal life*, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." The Spirit of God is the other witness. He comes into our hearts, and in connection with that word testifies that we *are God's children.* So the regenerated man has two witnesses: the word of God and the Spirit of God. I get almost discouraged sometimes in these inquiry meetings when to the question, "Are you a Christian?" so many reply, "Well, I hope I am." Dear friend, settle the question and know whether you

are God's child or not. Never stop till you have the Spirit of God testifying with your spirit. Yours is a poor, miserable religion if you have not enough of it to know that you have it. It is a very poor passing from death unto life if you do n't know whether you have passed or not. Now, this witnessing of the Spirit with our spirit that we are the children of God is an experience. No experience can be explained to a man that has never experienced it. Therefore you can not explain this to the satisfaction of an unregenerated man; but to a regenerated man it needs no explanation. He has experienced it himself; he has the witness in himself.

Another work of the Holy Spirit is to *guide us into all truth.* John xvi. 13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." The Spirit of truth is to guide us into all truth. What sort of truth? I answer, not scientific truth. The Holy Ghost did not come to teach scientific truth, nor philosophic truth. What truth, then, does he teach? Revealed truth; the things written here in God's word. The Holy Ghost is the author of this Book, and he is also the teacher. He comes to guide us in our study of the deep things revealed in the Bible. You will hear a great many men say, "I read the Bible, but I do n't see any thing in it; I do n't understand it. It is all confusion to me." How are they reading it? How do you

read your Bible? Perhaps you are trying to unlock these great treasures with a scientific key; or with a literary and critical key. You can not do it. These spiritual things are spiritually discerned; they are spiritually taught. We are to look to the Spirit of God for light and guidance if we would be led into the greatest depths and up to the grandest heights of God's revealed truth.

I will give an illustration. About two years ago when I was holding a meeting at Charlotte, North Carolina, I went with Mr. Hannah one day to the United States Mint. We examined a great many interesting things; and at last we went up to the great vault where he had his precious metals and valuables stowed away. There was a combination lock on it, like those on some of your safes in banks and offices. I took hold of the lock and turned it and then pulled it, but it would not open. Then I turned it back the other way, and still it would not open. Why? I did not understand the combination. Prof. Hannah put his hand on it and gave it a certain number of turns and it opened without difficulty. He understood the combination. Now, here is a great vault, in which are stored away the precious jewels of heaven, the rich treasures of gold from the mines of eternal truth. Now, if you want to unlock the vault and enjoy the rich treasures, lay aside the scientific and the philosophic key; that is not the combination. Lay aside your speculative and critical methods; that is not the combination. Come to it under the guidance and influence and light of the Holy Ghost,

and then you can open the treasure house and bring out precious things, new and old.

The canon of Scripture is closed. While God's Holy Spirit is not confined to that word, and can guide men independently of it as he did Philip when he told him to go and talk to the eunuch, yet let us remember this fundamental principle: the Holy Spirit *never guides a man contrary to the revealed word.* Whenever you see a man or woman laying down certain theories and preaching certain doctrines, and claiming to be instructed and taught of the Spirit, just ask, "Can you give us God's word to show that your course of action is right? Are your teachings scriptural?" If a religious teacher can not explain and justify his position by the Bible, put it down that he is not led by God's Spirit. God can not contradict himself. The Holy Ghost can not lead a man in a course contrary to any principle laid down in the Scriptures.

Another work of the Holy Spirit is *interceding for us.* Rom. viii. 26: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered." I thank God for that intercessory prayer of the Lord Jesus recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John; and also for the fact that the Holy Spirit, the divine Comforter, our Guide, intercedes for us.

This explains a fact that occurs in the experience of many Christians. Have you not sometimes for weeks or months been under a cloud, not enjoying

communion with God, not enjoying the word, nor prayer? Who has not sometimes been thus cold and lukewarm and spiritually bowed down and unhappy? Then all at once, some day or night, you scarcely knew why, the cloud suddenly seemed to drift away and the bright sunlight soon began to shine into your soul, and you felt glad and happy. Once more you were in sweet communion with your heavenly Father, and your soul rejoiced in God your Savior. Yet perhaps you had not been attending church; you had not been especially devotional; you had not been making any particular efforts to secure light and joy. Has not that been the experience of many of you? It has been mine many a time. Do you know the explanation of it? The Holy Ghost, whom the Son sent to enlighten and comfort his children saw you wandering, saw the influence that Satan or the world was beginning to exert upon you; and this blessed and divine Comforter made intercession for you "with groanings that can not be uttered," and the Father heard and for the sake of the Son sent the answer. So the blessing came down upon your soul. I love Jesus my Savior, and I also love the Holy Ghost my Comforter, who is my guide and strength through this wilderness. He is to me what the pillar of cloud and fire was to the Jews in their wanderings.

The Holy Spirit also *comforts us.* Acts ix. 31: "Then had all the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the

comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Notice this vital statement: They were walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Mark it, the comfort of the Holy Ghost and walking in the fear of the Lord are two things that go together, and if you are going to abide in the comfort of the Holy Ghost then you must walk in the fear of the Lord. You can not walk with the world, you can not walk in the dark, and have communion with him who is light. You can not walk after the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, and have the comfort of the Holy Ghost. You must walk in the fear of the Lord, in the commandments, or you can not enjoy the presence and blessing of the Spirit.

Take an illustration from Scripture. David walked in the dark in that terrible sin with Bathsheba, and what was the result? Hear his cry, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." He went into the dark, and no sooner had he done that than he lost the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Dear friend, you can not live in sin, and walk as this world walks, and at the same time have the comfort of the Spirit.

That explains a very common thing. You hear a great many people say, as a great many say to me, "I do believe I was once converted, but I am no longer happy. I do not enjoy my religion. What is the trouble?" Ah, nine times out of ten, the trouble is you have not been walking in the light, as he is in the light; you have not been

walking in the strait and narrow way; you have been walking around with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Consequently if you are a child of God at all you are like David; you have lost the joy of salvation. It is not enough to have salvation; we ought to go a step farther and have the joy of salvation.

You know the Savior says, "I will not leave you comfortless;" literally, "I will not leave you orphans." We are not left orphans. The Holy Spirit comes to dwell with us and to care for us and look after us. The children of God are not a lot of orphans down here on an old rocky island; we are the children of a King, we are marching through Immanuel's land. And all the way the Holy Spirit is our Comforter.

Here are a father and mother quietly resting upon their bed at night, and a darling little one in the cradle close to the bed. In the dead hours of the night a dark storm-cloud rises, and the muttering thunder draws nearer, and then the terrible flash comes, and then the rain. Directly the blinds slam to and fro; and the child wakes and sees the lightning and hears the thunder. Startled and afraid it begins to cry, when the father reaches out his hand, with the assuring word, "Be quiet; papa is here, mother is here; all is right. Be quiet." And the little one folds its hands. Its fears are quieted and it goes to sleep again. That is about the way it is with us. Here in this world of sin, the dark storm-clouds come, and the billows roll high, and very often we are sorrowful and afraid.

But the blessed Comforter, the Holy Ghost, comes to us, and says as in the Master's words, "Peace, be still. It is I; be not afraid." Then, like Bunyan's pilgrim, we realize that the lions are chained, and we walk right along between them, our hearts comforted and our fears gone.

Another work of the Holy Spirit is to *impart love*. Rom. v. 5: "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The love of God, that is redeeming love, God's eternal love, is shed abroad in our hearts when we are regenerated. Then we are told in the fifth chapter of Galatians that love is one of the fruits of the Spirit. The Spirit, abiding in our hearts, produces new love, increases our love.

Is there any body here that has not the love he ought to have for his fellow-men or fellow-Christians or for God? What is the trouble? You are not abiding in communion with Christ; therefore the legitimate fruits of the Holy Ghost are not developed in your heart and life. Any man in whose heart is the love of God will love every one else in whom is the love of God, regardless of name or nation or church.

It is also the work of the Holy Spirit to *impart hope*. Rom. xv. 13: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." "The God of hope"—mark that—"The God of hope fill you with all peace *in believing*." You do not get hope except in believ-

ing. There is little hope for that man in whom the Spirit has never shed abroad the love of God. This is a significant fact: When a man is hopeful he is energetic, courageous; hope is an element of strength. But a hopeless man settles down into inaction and weakness. This is true of our Christian work. We will work or fail to work for God according as we abound more or less in hope through the Holy Ghost. Did you ever see a man that had no hope? He is sure that nothing can be done. He has no hope that any body will be converted in the meeting, that any souls will be saved; he don't expect to see any thing accomplished. What is the trouble with such persons? They are not abiding in communion with the Spirit. When our hearts are filled with the Spirit, then we are full of hope. Then we are active and we accomplish something.

Another work of the Holy Spirit is to *impart liberty.* 2 Cor. iii. 17: Now, the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." The Spirit of the Lord imparts liberty—that is, freedom, unction, ease, power, in contradistinction to restraint and stiffness, and the mere form without the power.

Let us be a little practical. There are some of you dear good brothers and sisters that can not talk to a penitent in the inquiry meeting; you can not open your mouth for Jesus. Some of you are so excessively modest you can not read a passage of Scripture. You can not get your mouth open and get out one word for Jesus. You say it is modesty.

No, it is not. You think it is timidity. No, you are mistaken. You persuade yourself that it is embarrassment, but it is not that. What is it? I will tell you: your heart is not filled with the Holy Spirit. If it was you would be like Peter and John when the Jewish Sanhedrim charged them straitly that they should not speak any more in Christ's name. They said, "We can not but speak the things of God." Why? Because "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and when the heart is full of the Spirit the mouth will have liberty. Then we can and will talk and testify for Christ.

I will give you an illustration from Scripture: You remember that on a certain occasion Peter was warming himself by the fire, and there came along a little maid and said, "You are one of Christ's disciples." How about Peter's mouth and liberty? All in the world he could get his mouth to say was, "I do n't know what you say." Another one came, and all that he could say was to deny his Master. What was the matter with Peter? He was following the Master afar off. He was not in close communion and fellowship with him. A few days after that we see Peter on the day of Pentecost standing beside that empty grave of Jesus Christ; and with true moral courage, and with his soul afire with zeal and love, he hurled into the teeth of the Jews the accusation that with wicked hands they had taken the Lord and crucified and slain him. He preached with such liberty and unction and power that three thousand souls were saved under that one

sermon. We all can talk if we are full of a thing. We can speak for God if we are filled with God's Spirit. That is what we want; and one of the blessings of a gracious revival is that it gets us all—evangelists, pastors, church members—down off of our stilts, it takes away our stiffness and cold formalism, and we all feel that this is God's house and God's work, and we are God's children. We are communing with one another and with our blessed Lord. We are workers for souls, and we never think of being stilted or formal or embarrassed. It is God's Spirit that gives us liberty.

Another work of the Spirit is to *impart strength.* Eph. iii. 16: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." It is, then, the work of the Holy Spirit to strengthen. A soul "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man" is the grandest power on this earth. That one man, Elijah, on Mount Carmel, strong in the Spirit's might, was more than a match for Ahab with four hundred and fifty false prophets and all Israel at his back. One man, Saul of Tarsus, filled with the Holy Ghost, was more than a match for all the philosophers at Athens, and he and a few others turned the world upside down. We need moral, spiritual strength; strength imparted by the Spirit in the inner man.

An illustration from the Bible will show you what a power a man is when strengthened by the Holy Ghost, and how much greater power he has than all other men without this divine endowment.

Here is Saul of Tarsus. He made many missionary journeys and planted many churches. Suppose he is going to start on one of his missionary tours. "Where are you going, Paul?" "I am going to Antioch, or Philippi, or Corinth, or Athens, or Rome." "What are you going to do there?" "Preach the gospel and plant the church in that town." "Who is going to entertain you?" "I don't know whether I shall be entertained or not; I may be put in jail." "Who is going to pay your way?" "I don't know." "Who is backing you?" "Nobody but God Almighty." "Who are you depending on?" "Nobody but the Lord." "What great missionary board stands behind you?" "None at all." We see that man go forth, in some places only the Lord standing with him; we see him enter these heathen cities, preach the gospel, win souls and plant churches, all without the help of mortal man. What is the explanation? He was strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man.

Understand me: I would not put church organizations and missionary boards at any discount. These are all right and proper in their place; we need them, and can not get along without them; but I am simply showing that there is a power better and higher than these. That power is God's Spirit, strengthening us with might in the inner man.

We learn also that the Holy Spirit *convinces of sin.* John xvi. 8: "And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and

of judgment." That is, the Holy Ghost comes to reprove, to convince the world—the unsaved, unregenerate part of mankind. He will convince them of sin. It is right to preach, it is right to use argument and logic, it is right to talk and exhort and sing. But there is but one power in the universe that can bring conviction to the heart of a guilty sinner, and that is the Holy Ghost. We can convince the man's judgment; we can show him from God's word that, unless he repents, he is going to hell; all sinners can see that. But the Holy Ghost must give that deep conviction of sin that makes the sinner cry from the depths of his soul, "What shall I do to be saved?" that causes him to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Then let us preach, read, talk, pray; but let us remember that the power comes from the Holy Ghost, and ask him to impart to these unsaved souls genuine conviction of sin.

Another work of the Holy Spirit is to *invite sinners to come*. Rev. xxii. 17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." I believe in verbal inspiration. Notice the phraseology: "The Spirit *and* the bride say, Come." Not the Spirit *or* the bride, but "the Spirit *and* the bride." The Holy Ghost invites men to come to Christ; but, mark you, while he can work in other ways, it is God's revealed plan that the Spirit shall work in and through the church. The church of God and the Spirit of God

are to work in conjunction; together they are to say to dying sinners, "Come, come to Christ." But about nine tenths of you dear church people want the pastors and evangelists and a few workers to say, Come, while you sit here in the inquiry meeting and look on, and never open your mouth. God commands you, in connection with that Holy Spirit, to say, "Come." The Bible does not say, "Pray come." You ought to pray that men may come, but you are to do something in addition to your prayers. You are to go to the dying man and *say*, Come. You are praying for your children—a little now and then—but did you ever say to your child, Come? "I can't talk to my children," says somebody. If you can not I am afraid it is because you do not live right before your children. That is generally the difficulty in such cases.

Finally, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to *fill us with himself.* Eph. v. 18: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." I think there is a great deal of misconception as to what is meant by being filled with the Spirit. Let us now get a clear-cut conception. Is not the Holy Spirit a personality? Yes. If you have the Holy Spirit then you have a personality. It is not first a part of a personality, and then more of a personality, and afterward still more. That is not the teaching of the Bible, but it is the idea of a great many people. Now, if the Holy Spirit is a personality, when you have the Spirit at all you have his personality. What do you mean, then, by being filled with the Holy Spirit? The Bible idea

is not that you get more and more of this personality, but, if I may turn the figure around the other way, it is that this personality gets more and more of you; gets fuller and fuller possession, and more and more complete control of you. That is the true meaning of being filled with the Spirit. The moment a man is born of God, the Spirit of God takes up his abode in the heart, the Holy Ghost, the personality, is present.

Then what is the business of the Christian life? It is not to get more of that Spirit, but to give more of self to the Spirit. Notice this phraseology, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit." There is a wonderful analogy suggested in these words. Here is a man who drinks wine. I do not know how much it will take to make him drunk; let us say a quart, for the sake of illustration. A man takes a quart of wine into his stomach. He has swallowed the whole quart. But wait an hour, and you will see that it is not all confined to his stomach; it has been taken up by the circulation. Some of it is in his brain, and some in his feet, and some in his hands; it permeates his entire system. There is no more wine in him an hour after he drank it than there was the moment he swallowed it, but the wine has got more complete possession of his entire physical being; he is filled with it now. He had it all in him at the beginning, but he is now filled with it as he was not at first. Now, says the Bible, do not do that, but be filled with the Spirit.

On the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were

filled with the Spirit, the multitude thought they were drunk with new wine. When a man is born of God the personality of the Holy Ghost enters his soul. Let him, day by day and year by year, subordinate his mind, heart, affections, desires, inclinations, his entire being, to the influence of the Holy Ghost, until his heart beats in unison with God's heart, and his will is swallowed up in the divine will; until his plans are God's plans; until at last heart and brain and soul and body are all under the influence and guidance and control of the Holy Spirit. This is what is meant by being filled with the Spirit.

May I give you just one other illustration? Did you ever build a new house and move into it? When I built my little house in Asheville, N. C.—the first house I ever had of my own—as soon as one room was finished I was so eager to get into my own home that I moved into that room. They went on getting another room ready, and when it was finished I moved some of the household goods into it; and when the four or five rooms were all finished I moved some of the things into every one—some into the little hall, some down into the basement, and some up into the attic. By the time I left home in the fall I had the house completely occupied from attic to basement. I was in the house the first day, but I did not have possession of all of it. So the Holy Ghost came into your heart when you were born of God. Give him that chamber, and another, and another. Take something out that stands in his way. Let the Holy Ghost get possession. Give

him possession of every chamber and hallway and closet in head, heart, and soul. Let all be his from cellar to garret. Be filled with the Holy Ghost. That is what the blessed Spirit, the Comforter, wants—to dwell in every affection of our souls, in every aspiration of our lives. When we are thus filled with all the fullness of God we will have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

The Shepherd and the Sheep.

THE topic of our expository Bible reading this morning is the Shepherd, the Sheepfold, and the Sheep. Instead of taking one verse, or a number of verses scattered here and there, for a text, let us take the first thirty verses of the tenth chapter of John as the subject for a running exposition or expository reading. I will read the first verse, and the congregation will read in concert the second, I the third, and the congregation the fourth, and so on through the thirtieth verse. The whole thirty verses form the text for the Bible reading.

I suppose all who love the Scriptures at all love some part especially. It is so with me. I love the whole Bible, but there are some parts of it more precious than other parts; some parts that I specially love. For instance, I very much love the third chapter of John, and the fourteenth, fifteenth, and seventeenth chapters of John; I find special sweetness and comfort in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and the twenty-third Psalm. But I believe if I had to give up all the Bible except one chapter, I would hold on to the very last to this tenth chapter of John. To my own heart I find no chapter in God's word more sweet, more consoling, more encouraging, because there are in it, besides

a great many other blessed truths, so many precious things about Jesus. God's word all the way along is full of Jesus. In the Old Testament and in the New it is Jesus. The difference between Christ in the Old and Christ in the New Testament is about this: In the Old Testament he is presented as the rose of Sharon in the bud, and in the New Testament as the same rose of Sharon in full bloom. I am sorry for that person, and especially for that professor of faith in Christ, who reads the Old Testament and does not find Jesus in every thing. Christ is in the brazen serpent, in the smitten rock, in the paschal lamb, in the turtle dove—in every thing all through the books of Moses and the historical books, in the Psalms and Proverbs and prophecies. Jesus is there in types. Not only that, but God's word is a kind of celestial kaleidoscope. Every time the kaleidoscope is turned around it presents Jesus, but each time from a different point of view—Jesus in a different light. Sometimes he is presented as the plant of renown, sometimes as the paschal lamb, sometimes as the morning star, sometimes as the great foundation-stone, and sometimes as the sun of righteousness; and each one of these figures teaches some great truth concerning his character or work.

But here in the chapter we have read this morning we have Christ presented as the Shepherd. Of all the figures in the Bible I know of none that is fuller of precious suggestions than this one. If you will just take God's word and a good concordance and look up every passage that has the word "shepherd" in it, and study the Scripture in connection

with Christ as a shepherd, it will not be long till your heart will be warm, your soul glad, and your faith strong. You will feel in deed and in truth that Jesus is what he claims to be, a good Shepherd.

There are a great many things we might say about Christ as a shepherd, but there are just three thoughts on this part of the subject before us that I want especially to present: Christ as a *good* shepherd, Christ as the *great* shepherd, and Christ as the *chief* shepherd. The word of God presents him in each one of those phases. Here in John x. 11 Jesus says, "I am the *good* shepherd." Why is Christ the *good* shepherd? The reason is given in that same verse: "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd *giveth his life* for the sheep." The hireling may flee when the wolf comes, when danger arises, in the hour of persecution; but the good shepherd, Jesus Christ, who loves us, will suffer no danger, no persecution, no poverty, trial or affliction to turn him aside from seeking our welfare and salvation. He laid down his life for his sheep; we are told in God's own word that Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

Now, what is the conclusion we ought to draw from the fact that the good shepherd gave his life for us—mark it, his life? Here is the conclusion that I reach: If he gave his life for me, even when I was dead in trespasses and in sins, he will take care of me now after I have come to him and given him my heart and laid my hand in his; after I have taken him at his word and reposed my heart's confidence in him and in his promises. Will he not

now feed me? Will he not now give me every blessing that I need? Yes, I believe that he will. Hence, I joyfully accept that wonderful statement in God's blessed word: "But my God shall supply all of our need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

One of the suggestions of the devil is to doubt the Lord Jesus Christ, to doubt his love, his grace, his care, his goodness; to fear that he will not preserve you and keep you. Ah, Satan, I can not, I will not, believe you. My Master not only gave up the treasures, honors, and glories of heaven, but he came down here and was willing to be reproached, persecuted, maligned, slandered; willing to live a life of poverty and to die an ignominious death on the cross. Since he thus died for me there is nothing that he will withhold from me; I will trust him though he slay me.

You will find another reason why Christ is a good shepherd in this same chapter. He says, "I *know* my sheep." That is an important characteristic of a good shepherd, to know his sheep. Christ knows by name them that belong to him. He knows their voice when they cry to him; he knows their temptations, their trials, their persecutions; he knows how weary their feet grow, how heavy the burden is, and he knows just how much they can endure, and he will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able to bear. He will not suffer the old lion of hell, that goes about seeking whom he may devour, to destroy one of his sheep. If one yields to the influence of the devil

it is not because he could not resist; but, as James says, it is because he was enticed and drawn away of his own lust. You yourself are responsible if you have yielded to the insinuations of the evil one. But Jesus our shepherd knows how to give out strength and grace and encouragement and help to his weary, tempted ones. The world does not know us; all of God's children are simply sinners saved by grace. Though our hearts have been regenerated, though we are children of God we are still in the body, and this old fallen, sinful, wicked flesh will be sinful until we drop it in the grave. It will always be a fulcrum upon which the devil can use his lever while he tries to betray the soul into sin; and because he does that the world misunderstands us, misjudges us, and often says we are hypocrites when God knows that in our hearts we are not. Jesus knows us, and if our hearts are true to him, if in our hearts we love him, he will not misunderstand us; he will still love and help us. Peter could say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee," which was as much as to say, "Master, I know I have disgraced myself; I am a hot-headed, impetuous, foolish, overconfident disciple. I acknowledge all; the devil has taken me at unawares. I have denied thee, but, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Our Master did not say nay, to Peter, but he said, "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs." And Jesus knows us; he looks at the secret things in our hearts; he judges not as man judges, and he never misjudges, he never misunderstands us. Hence that wonderful

statement, "To his own master he standeth or falleth." Let us, then, have hearts right in God's sight.

Another reason why Jesus is a good shepherd is because he *provides for his sheep.* Let us refer just for a moment to the twenty-third Psalm, and hear what David, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, says about Jesus: "The Lord is my shepherd"—the infinite Almighty God can provide for me—"I shall not want." We may lack some things that the flesh desires, but if we are God's sheep, following our shepherd in fear and love, we shall not want any real blessing, any spiritual good, for God says that he will give grace and glory, and "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures"—that is, in the green pastures of God's word, in fields where we feed upon the hidden manna that comes down from God's hand, about which the devil's goats know nothing. Not only that—he leads us beside the still waters, the still waters of salvation, that river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.

What else? "He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Now, the common idea about that verse is that the Psalmist is talking about a Christian going down through death. But simple death is not meant. The idea is this: according to the imagery that underlies this script-

ure, our journey from the cradle to the grave, and not simply the last step in the journey, is through a valley, the valley of the shadow of death, and all the way the rod and the staff of our Shepherd comfort us. Every day we are in the shadow of the grave-yard and of the tombstone—our life's journey is a journey through the valley of the shadow of death; and at every step our Shepherd watches over us and comforts us. The verse that follows shows that I am correct in this interpretation: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies"—the man is not dying but feasting. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life"—the man is still living, going on through this valley and all the way along is Jesus following him with blessings. "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." It is not only our privilege, when we come to die, to lean like Jacob upon our staff, but we are supported by it all the way along our journey, receiving, every day, life and comfort and strength.

Again, Christ as our shepherd holds us with his own hand and leads us along gently. Did you notice the verse that says, "No man can pluck them out of my Father's hand?" What does that mean? He who holds the seven stars in his hand holds his sheep also. Will you come and lay your hand in the hand of Jesus and let him hold it, let him keep you and lead you? Suppose a man is going across Main street with his little son four or five years old. The drays, the wagons, the carriages, the buggies, and the street-cars are dashing

up and down. The father says, "My son, put your hand in mine," and he takes hold of the child's hand and they cross the street in safety. The little fellow may stumble, he may make missteps, his feet may slip up, but that father is going to hold on to his child. It is so with Christ and the soul that clings to him. I am a poor sinner; and I am nothing; and the devil can trip me up a dozen times a day; he has a great deal more sense and wisdom and shrewdness and experience than I have; and he does trip me up, and he sets snares and I am often caught in them. But my hand is in my Savior's, and I look to him and trust him to keep me. I can't keep myself, but Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are."

Next, let us look at Christ as the *great* shepherd. Do you know why he is called the great shepherd? If you will turn to Hebrews xiii. 20 you will find these words: "Now the God of peace, that *brought again from the dead* our Lord Jesus, that *great shepherd* of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." Why is Jesus called the great shepherd? Because he *rose from the dead.* Hear what he says, "I lay down my life for the sheep. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and *I have power to take* it again." This is a source of encouragement to us. If our spiritual shepherd could die on the cross, then lie in that cold and silent grave, and then, chaining death

to his chariot wheels, rise triumphant above the stars, and ascend up to his Father, there are not devils enough in hell, nor powers enough in the grave, to keep one of God's saints there. They that are Christ's, says God, "shall rise at his coming;" yes, rise as he did. Death could not hold our great Shepherd, and since he could conquer death, hell, and the grave for himself and his own body, he can conquer them for us and for our bodies. Hence, the disciples preached Christ and the resurrection.

Christ is also called the *chief* shepherd. 1 Peter v. 4: "And when the chief shepherd *shall appear*, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Why is he called the chief shepherd? Because he is going to appear. Now in Hebrews ix. 28, we learn that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The good shepherd appeared the first time to die for the sheep; he then rose from the dead for their justification; and now when all things are ready, and when that upper and better sheep-fold is finished, the chief shepherd shall appear. The angels said in Acts i. 11: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." He shall appear again to gather up his living saints and translate them, and to raise the bodies of the sleeping dead, when together with them we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Read 1 Thess. iv. 16: "For

the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

When that good Shepherd shall come, those little lambs of his that are sleeping out yonder in the lonely grave-yards, shall be removed from their tombs and shall be brought forth glorified and immortalized; and every one of God's dear saints, every one of his sheep, sleeping in every obscure place, shall be taken up to be with him. It may be a missionary in far away Asia, or Africa, Henry Martyn, perhaps; or it may be some soldier boy lying out yonder in that neglected grave overgrown with briars and weeds and with no tombstone to mark the resting place; but in either case Jesus knows where sleeps the body of his saint. As Michael guarded the body of Moses, so the Lord will have some angel to guard our bodies and to keep them till in that morning the good Shepherd shall gather them all up. Then he will go before and lead his sheep up those evergreen mountains of God into that better Eden—to those green fields where the frosts of sin shall never come, and where the lion or wolf shall never enter, and where all God's people will spend a blissful eternity with the great Shepherd.

So much for Christ as the shepherd; now I want to say a few words about the sheep-fold. Christ

says, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in" —that is, into the sheep-fold—"he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." Again he says, "I say unto you he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." What do you mean by the sheep-fold? I mean the visible organization of Christians, God's church on earth. It is not so much whether you are *in* that fold, as it is *how* did you get there? Did you come in by the door of Jesus Christ, the blood of sprinkling, and the washing of regeneration? If so, I bid you God-speed; you are a sheep. Did you climb up some other way? Then Jesus Christ says that you are a thief and a robber. Suppose a man has a flock of sheep and a sheep-fold and a high fence all around it. Another man near by has a flock of goats. A tall tree on the outside of the sheep-fold, but close beside the fence, is blown down and falls across the fence. You know the climbing propensity of a goat. Well, here are the goats on the outside, and one of them, mischievous and curious, walks up the log, till he reaches the top of the fence, and then down into the fold. Now, *where* is he? He is in the sheep-fold. *What* is he? He is a goat; walking a log will not change a goat into a sheep. He is in the sheep-fold, but he is not a sheep; he is a goat and nothing else.

You belong to the church, and perhaps you make a good deal of parade about it. You say a great deal about it. How did you get into the church? Did you come in by the door, Jesus

Christ? Did you come in by the blood of sprinkling, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost? "No, no;" some one answers; "I don't know any thing about that." My dear friend, if you do not, if you did not come in that way, what are you? Let me tell you the plain, naked truth: You are simply one of the devil's goats among God's sheep. To come into God's sheep-fold in some other way than through the atoning and transforming blood of Jesus Christ will no more change such a goat into one of God's sheep than the walking of a literal log into an actual sheep-fold will change a literal, actual goat into a sheep. Jesus Christ speaks of those who do not belong to him as goats. When he shall judge the nations we are told in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew that he will place the "sheep" upon the right and the "goats" upon the left. So the Scriptures justify us in designating sinners as the devil's goats.

Are you a sheep or a goat? Have you been born of God, or not? It will do you no good to be in God's church unless you are one of God's sheep. It will benefit neither you nor the church. It does that goat no good to come over into the sheep-fold; nor does his coming do the sheep any good. Very often it does the sheep much harm. I want to show you how a church and its members may be harmed by an unsaved sinner getting into the Lord's flock. Here is this goat, he comes over into the sheep-fold, and takes up his abode with the sheep. He grows familiar with some of them, and

cultivates their acquaintance until they become very much attached to him. This goat is one of the leaders among the goats outside; and when he starts forth to enjoy the society of his friends we will see two or three of those admiring sheep coming after him. "Where are you going?" "I am going outside with this goat. I am going out to get into *society*." "What sort of society?" "Goat society." Here is a sheep following a goat to get into goat society. Now such society may be very good for goats, but it is not good for sheep. So sinners get into the church of God; they stay a little while, but soon find the Christian's manna very dry bread. They find the green pastures very poor picking. But they form intimate attachments with some of God's flock. And when they start out again into the world with all of its fascinations and worldly-mindedness, and dissipation, as such unregenerated church members are sure to do, some Christians will follow them. "Where are you going?" "I am going to get into society." "What sort of society?" "This sinner society: this fashionable, unregenerate society." That may be very nice society for the devil's goats, but it is very poor society for God's saints. While I live in this world, and when I go hence, I want to enjoy the society of the pure and the holy, the regenerated and the sanctified. What the world calls its "society" has little good and much evil in it. Dear church members, do not go off with the devil's goats for the sake of getting into society. If you do you will be led astray; you will get into trouble.

Let us now speak of the sheep aside from the fold. Proneness to go astray is a peculiarity about a sheep, and when he does go astray he has less sense about coming home than any other animal. My father had on his farm all kinds of stock, including sheep and goats too. I learned about them all, for it was my business to look after the sheep. If horses or cows went astray they would often come back. Even a hog would go and come back. But when the sheep got astray they seemed to lose all their sense. They would get into a swamp and wander farther and farther from home, never returning until sought out and brought back by the shepherd. This is a picture of our proneness to wander away from God. What the Bible says in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is true: "All we like sheep have gone astray." It is natural for us to go astray. The old flesh is in us, and the devil's goats are among us, and there are so many attractions to our fallen nature that very often we are led into the paths of sin. But the good shepherd follows after us, and he is going to bring us back. He may have to deal severely with us sometimes, but he will leave the ninety and nine until he finds the one that is lost.

Several years ago, one cold, rainy day in February, I was traveling in North Missouri, between Kansas City and St. Louis. Over on a hill I noticed a sheep-cot, and a flock of sheep within the fold. Some distance away was one old sheep and a little lamb. I saw the shepherd go to them and take the little lamb up in his arms. As he walked

toward the sheep-cot the little lamb would bleat and the old sheep kept following and was thus led gently back into the fold. How often God's sheep go astray and take the little lambs with them. Fathers and mothers, you can not wander into sinful ways without leading your children with you. If *you* don't love these lambs Jesus does, and if you persist in leading them astray he may take them away from you. Here are some Christian fathers and mothers, God's children, who have gone off with the devil's goats, who have wandered away on the cold, dark mountains. The good Shepherd comes to them and takes their little lamb into his arms and carries it up into that blessed home on high, because the lamb was being led astray, and also in order that the parents may be brought back to the fold. As the sheep was brought back by following the little lamb, so many a straying Christian has been turned heavenward again because of the little child that Christ took to heaven. Does it not make your heart feel a greater longing for heaven to know that those little feet are now walking the streets of gold with the multitude of other little ones that Christ has taken to his arms? The good Shepherd will take care of these little lambs. They are watching and waiting for you to come back to the fold. Dear children of God, follow the steps of your good Shepherd. Keep your little lambs under his tender care. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

I read these words of the Lord Jesus about the good shepherd and his sheep: "He calleth his own

sheep by name, and leadeth them out, ... and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." That scripture used to puzzle me a great deal. When I read it, and then saw a man or a woman that I believed was converted, one in whom I had seen evidences of genuine repentance, going contrary to the teachings of Christ, and sometimes following a voice that I knew was not the Shepherd's voice, I could not reconcile the two things. But I understand it better now.

Several years ago I read an article, I think in the *Sunday-School Times*, which told about an American traveler in the Holy Land, who stopped to rest one day under the shade of the trees near a cool spring, where there was a trough always full of water. He had not been there long before a shepherd came to water his sheep. Another flock came up also, and mixed up with the first flock. Then a third shepherd came, and his sheep ran in, mixing up with those that came before. The traveler then asked, "How in the world are you ever going to separate the sheep?" One of the shepherds answered, "I have a peculiar way of calling my sheep; they know my call. Every sheep in my flock will follow me." Then he went out and called, and every sheep that belonged to his flock separated itself from the others. Then the second man went out and gave the peculiar call that his sheep knew, and they followed him. Then the traveler said to the third shepherd, "I believe

your sheep will follow me." "Try it," said the shepherd. So the traveler put on the shepherd's cloak and took his crook and tried to imitate the shepherd's call, but the sheep went on nibbling the grass and drinking the water and did not notice him. Then he said to the shepherd, "I don't believe they will notice you." But when the shepherd made his call immediately the whole flock followed him. Then the traveler asked, "Is it a fact that they always will follow their shepherd, and never follow any body else?" "I will tell you how that is," answered the shepherd. "As long as the sheep is perfectly healthy, perfectly free from the foot and mouth disease, he will always follow his own shepherd and nobody else. But the moment a sheep gets sick he will follow any body that will call him."

When I read that I said, "This solves my difficulty." When I see people, who I had reason to believe were once converted, going to a dance, I know they are sick sheep—they have the foot disease. When I see these church members going into the saloons, drinking whisky, I understand that they are sick sheep; they are sorely afflicted with the mouth disease. Just as long as one of God's sheep, feeding in these green pastures, beside these still waters, and following his shepherd, keeps his soul in a healthy, live, vigorous state, he does not want to follow any body but Jesus. He is not going to follow any body but the good Shepherd. But let him get a little sick, let him contract the mouth disease, and he is ready to follow any one into the

bar-room; or let a dancing master come along, and every sheep in town with the foot disease will be led away. Let us be healthy, sound, vigorous sheep. Let us grow in grace and strength, so as not to be led astray by every sinner that entices us.

One final thought: Jesus says there shall be one fold and one shepherd. There seem to be two folds in this sense: there is a Jewish fold and there is a Gentile fold. Then there are two folds also in this sense: part of the sheep are on one side of the river and part on the other. But when that chief Shepherd shall appear he will gather up all of the sheep out of this lost, ruined world. He will gather up every stray one that has gone out in the cold, dark mountains. All will be gathered up yonder into that fold of which he said, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Then there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.

CONFESSION.

DANIEL ix. 4: "And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments. We have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments." I would be glad if, at your leisure, you would read the ninth chapter of Daniel through the twenty-third verse. I call your attention now to the fourth verse, and especially to the two words, "My confession." Confession is the subject of our Bible reading this morning. I want to give you a number of Scripture verses bearing on this theme. These verses will show you what God says about confession of sins, about confessing Jesus, about the confession of sins and of faults by believers, about Christ's confession of his people, and the unsaved sinner's final confession of Jesus.

Do you know that to confess a wrong or a sin is one of the hardest things for human nature to do? It takes a man with some force of character to come out squarely and say, "I was wrong, I was to blame." It is one of the most difficult things in

this world to get the proud, stubborn human heart up to that point. Hence the great difficulty in getting sinners to confess their sins. This has been true in all ages. It is true of men everywhere. Did you ever go through a penitentiary and talk with the inmates? Did you ever catechise them as to why they were in prison? I have visited a great many penitentiaries. They afford excellent opportunities for the study of human nature. I have asked convicts about the crimes for which they were sentenced, and I have heard many questions asked them by others. Do you know that there is not one man in a hundred in the penitentiary that will confess frankly that he is guilty, and deserving of punishment? To the question, "What did they put you in here for?" various answers are given. One says, "Some man swore a lie on me;" another, "They caught the wrong man;" still another, "The jury was bribed." I heard of one poor old colored man who, when the question was put to him, "What did they put you in here for, uncle?" answered, "Boss, I fotched up the wrong cow." He didn't steal a cow; he didn't mean to steal a cow; he just "fotched up" the wrong one. A curious sort of accidental thing. That old negro was a descendant of Adam, akin to all of us.

When God asked Eve about her sin did she confess it? No; she tried to put it off on the devil. "The *serpent* beguiled me, and I did eat," as much as to say, "I didn't intend to do any thing wrong." Adam, instead of coming out like a man and confessing his sin to God, said, "The woman whom

thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat;" as much as to say, "I have not done any thing wrong; I have not committed any sin; it was that *woman's* fault." So it was with Adam and Eve; so it is even down to this day. Men are not willing to come out before God and man and make an honest, frank confession of their guilt.

Now, let us hear what God says about confessing our sins. Num. v. 6, 7: "Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty, then they shall confess their sin which they have done; and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed." There is the unequivocal, unmistakable, emphatic requirement of God, without any exceptions or conditions. "If a man or woman commit a sin," God says he or she shall confess that sin. Now, dear dying man, you have sinned, and you know it, and God knows it. God requires that you confess your sin. Are you willing to do it?

What is a confession of sins? It is, so to speak, coming and laying them before God, and saying, "O God, here they are, these abominable sins which I have committed. I confess them; I am guilty. O God, forgive." That is confession; it is uncovering, laying bare the sin before God. Now, what will God do with your sins when you confess them, when you repent of them, and put your faith in Jesus Christ? He says: "I will cover them up in

the depths of the sea; I will cast them behind my back; I will remove them as far from you as the east is from the west; I will remember them against you no more." It is a wise thing, then, to come and make an honest confession to Almighty God and have your sins wiped out.

What is a refusal to confess sins? It is adding a lie to the transgression; it is trying to say you have nothing to confess; it is covering up your sins. It is illustrated by the conduct of Achan when he had violated God's commandment and stolen a wedge of gold and a Babylonish garment. He went and dug a hole in his tent and there buried his gold and his garment, thus refusing to confess, and trying to cover up his sin. Did God Almighty uncover it? Did he not trace the sin right to Achan's door in spite of his refusal to confess it? Dear friend, you can no more hide your sins from God, you can no more cover them up, than Achan could. Those midnight deeds of yours, those dark, secret sins, you may refuse to confess them here, but God has his eye on you, and so certain as you cover them up God will uncover them to your confusion and to your eternal ruin. Will you come, like an honest man, and confess to God and cast yourself upon his mercy and be forgiven; or will you, Achan-like, cover up your sins to have God uncover them and expose them and damn your soul because of them? That is the issue that meets you this morning face to face.

Now, I want to give you two separate incidents from God's word; precedents that illustrate the wis-

dom of confessing our sins, and also the folly of denying or concealing them. Luke xviii. 13, 14: "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Here were two men that went up to the temple to pray, a Pharisee and a publican. The Pharisee stood and thanked God that he did not do this and that and the other, and he thanked God that he was not like other men, especially that he was not like this poor, miserable publican. There was not one scintilla of a confession in any thing he said or did. He went down from God's house the same proud, self-righteous, non-confessing, guilty, condemned Pharisee that he had been before. He received no blessing, no pardon, no justification. How was it with the other man, the publican? Hear what he says: "God, be merciful to *me*, a *sinner*." This was as much as to say, "O God, here are my sins; I am guilty; have mercy upon me, a guilty, confessing sinner." God did have mercy; he heard this penitent prayer, and "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." Friends, you who are unsaved, will you, like that self-righteous Pharisee, refuse to confess your sins; or will you, like that poor publican, honestly confess them before God to-day, and cast yourself upon his mercy?

Let us look at another Bible incident. Luke

xxiii. 40–43: "But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." There was Christ on the cross, and on each side was a guilty, miserable sinner. One of those men went that day with Christ to paradise, the other one went down to eternal perdition. Why? Because Christ loved the one better than the other? No. Because the one was more guilty than the other? Because Christ was any more able to save the one than the other? No. This was the cause: One of them was a repenting, confessing sinner, and the other was not. Which one of those men are you going to imitate? Will you like that penitent thief confess your sins, and like him put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved; or will you like the other refuse to confess your sin, go out of God's house to-day impenitent and unpardoned, and at last go down to death and hell? Dear dying man, you will never be saved as long as you cover up your sin and refuse to confess it.

Now, let us see what God says about a confession of Jesus. Mark it, confession of sin, on the one hand, goes right along with confession of Jesus, on the other hand. When we confess our sins, our guilt, we also confess our unworthiness, our insuf-

ficiency and helplessness, and that we justly deserve eternal condemnation. That is a confession that we need a Savior; and when we accept this Savior and he saves us from our guilt and helplessness, from sin and hell, *then* it magnifies his grace and honors his glorious gospel to confess him as our Savior from these things. Confession of sin is an acknowledgement of our need of Christ; confession of Christ is an acknowledgement of his grace that saves us from sin. I have no faith in the man who says he is a Christian and is not willing to confess Christ. You have never confessed your sin if you are not willing to confess your Savior.

Let us hear what God says on this subject. Rom. x. 9: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Notice particularly the phrase, "*believe in thine heart?*" Guard against thinking a mere flippant, shallow, superficial assent of the mind to the truth, or a mere surface confession is sufficient. If you believe with your heart, and that belief is accompanied by your confession, God's word for it, you shall be saved. Take another verse. 1 John iv. 15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." That is, to put the thought in another form of scriptural phraseology, Christ is formed the hope of glory in the man that thus confesses Jesus; God dwells in him; he has become "a new creature in Christ Jesus," and is dwelling in God.

Let us go a step farther. Read Matt. xvi. 16, 17: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." That is, you did not find it out by your bodily senses, you did not discover it by any ordinary mental process; it did not come by any human philosophy. It was revealed by Almighty God, the Father which is in heaven. That is, God the Father revealed Jesus Christ as the Son of God to Peter's inner consciousness, his inmost soul. You can not know that Jesus is your Savior, and the divine Son of God, and feel the reality of this truth in your heart by a sweet experience, unless it is revealed to you by our heavenly Father. Hence, that other scripture, "No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost." You can without the Holy Ghost flippantly say that Jesus is the Christ but you can not say it deep down in your heart and in your inmost soul except by the power of God dwelling in you. Like Thomas when, after Christ's resurrection, he exclaimed from the depths of his conscious experience, all doubt being removed, "My Lord and my God," so the man that truly confesses Christ from the depths of an honest heart and a conscious experience must feel the power of the Almighty stirring his soul. Hence, we are taught that we are born of God, which is to have Christ revealed *to* us by the Father, and formed *in* us the hope of glory. It is to be

made a new creature in Christ, to become a partaker of the divine nature. Now, this is what I call experimental godliness. It is the Gibraltar of God's saints. Why? Because when Christ is within, revealed to the heart, and when the soul realizes that Jesus is the Christ, a present personal Savior, that soul is forever settled on one subject, namely, the divinity of Jesus Christ. All hell can not shake that soul's faith in a divine Savior. No man to whom Jesus Christ has been revealed by God the Father as the Son of God is ever troubled again with doubts concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ; he knows that Jesus is the Christ, and that Christ is his Lord and his God, and standing on this rock, like Job of old he can say, "I *know* that my Redeemer liveth." Some skeptic may get him all in the fog; he may be confused about a great many things; but he can never be driven from that stronghold, for he will say, "I know, in my heart that Jesus is the Christ; I have felt his love and his power; I have held communion with him and I know he is my Lord and my God."

Consequently when we who do thus know the Lord hear people cavil and quibble about the divinity of Christ and the truth of this blessed gospel, it has no effect on us. It fills us with no fear, no alarm whatsoever. Here is an abiding principle, which I want you to grasp, for it is the key to certain facts in the church to-day, which we have all observed. A great many people join this, that, and the other church, and go through the regular routine of worship for a while, and then

they drift away and hardly ever attend the services. Then they begin to read some skeptical book; then they fall into doubt: first they do not believe what is said about Jonah and the whale, and then they do not believe in future punishment, after a while they deny the divinity of Christ, and at last they are full-fledged infidels. What is the explanation? There was at first a superficial confession, a mere joining the church, there was no revelation to the heart and soul by the Holy Ghost in the act of regeneration, that Jesus is the Christ. The soul grasped at the substance and caught the shadow, or mistook the shadow for the substance, but soon finding that there was nothing in the shadow jumped to the conclusion that the faith of others is also empty and delusive, that there is nothing in a religious experience or profession, thus finally ending in infidelity. There is no more dangerous thing in this world than to be intimately and closely associated with sacred and holy things and at the same time have neither part nor lot in them. The hardest man to reach is that man who belongs to the church and goes through all the formulas and ceremonies of devotion and worship, and yet has never known any thing about true, heart-felt religion. I would rather try to reach an out-and-out scoffer and a rejecter of the gospel. When Jesus preached, many souls were saved, many outsiders were drawn into the kingdom; but there was Judas Iscariot, right next to him, hearing all his sermons, seeing his miracles, the treasurer of the chosen twelve, intimately associated with the Mas-

ter in all of these things, but without any share in the real spiritual blessing. Judas had neither part nor lot in the matter. His heart was not in the work, consequently this man who stood among those closest to Jesus Christ was the one that sold him for thirty pieces of silver.

I knew of a man, who had formerly been a preacher, and who said, "Ah well, I was a preacher for a long time, but I am an out-and-out infidel now. There is nothing in this whole gospel story —or in all this talk about religion. It is all delusion and fraud." Now, one of two things is true: either this man was a hypocrite when he was preaching that gospel, or he is not truthful now. He either had never known Jesus Christ at all, or he was not honest and sincere when he said he did not believe in his divinity.

Let us now hear what the Bible says about *confessing Jesus before men.* Some people are like Joseph of Arimathea. They think they can follow Christ secretly and go to heaven without ever making a confession. It is a great mistake to try to go to heaven "on the sly." Hear what God says. Matt. x. 33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him shall I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Some of you may think that I insist too much on your coming out here night after night, and publicly confessing Jesus Christ. This verse is my authority: Jesus Christ tells us to confess him before men; therefore, before men, I give you these repeated opportunities to confess the Lord.

Read also Luke xii. 8, 9: "I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before man shall be denied before the angels of God." Some of you men are ashamed to come out before this congregation, before your former wicked companions, and confess the Lord Jesus Christ. I pity you from my heart. There will come a day when you will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, and if you have been ashamed of him here he will be ashamed of you there; if you have refused to confess him here he will refuse to confess you there.

Let us hear the word in Mark viii. 38: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." My friends, I would rather have the ground under me open this morning and swallow me down soul and body into that darkness beyond the confines of all worlds than to be ashamed of Christ and of his blessed word, or to deny him. How strange that any of us should be ashamed of his gospel, ashamed of his love, ashamed of his grace, or ashamed to let this world know that we love him better than all else. I am, by God's grace, going to be true to him, let the world think, say, and do what it may. I am Christ's and he is mine. I am not ashamed of him here, and I have his promise that he will not be ashamed of me yonder. Are you ashamed of him? Let that fire-

fly out yonder under the rock be ashamed to come out and confess the sun that shines peerless in the cloudless sky to-day; there will be more propriety in that than for you—poor dying clod of clay—to be ashamed of your Maker and your Redeemer, the Son of God, who is "the chiefest among ten thousand" and the one "altogether lovely." Let this heart cease to beat, let this tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, whenever I am ashamed of him who has loved me, and who has bought me, and washed me in his blood.

Now hear what God says about the *believer's confessing his sin.* You are a Christian? Yes. All of your sins have been forgiven, and you have become God's child by being born of God. In your spiritual birth the relation of a child to a father was established. Now, what is this child of God going to do about the sins he commits after he is converted? Hear what God says. 1 John i. 9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If you are God's child and you have done wrong—and you are a wonderful man if you have not—if you have been overtaken in sin, you will not be satisfied to go on and live in that sin, but you will come back to your Father and, as a prodigal, confess your sins, and he stands pledged to forgive you. Some of you church members have been doing wrong; you have been committing sin in this way and in that, here and yonder. And what is the result? Your heart is cold, you are under a cloud; you are not enjoying religion; you

have no peace, no happiness. You are letting a cloud come in between you and your Father. Do you know how to remove it? Come like a child and confess your sins, for "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

An illustration may help some backslidden child of God to return to his Father. Here is a devoted and loving father who has a mischievous and wayward little boy. On Sunday morning the father says, "My son, don't go down to the train to-day, and don't go swimming in the river this afternoon, nor play marbles on the street." The little boy does very well for two or three hours, but at last he gets tired of the house and of reading his book. After dinner he goes out on the street, then to the train, then to the river to swim, and finally plays marbles with the boys. About night he comes in, and there is the father sitting in his room alone. Feeling mean and guilty the boy draws up his little chair and sits down. His face is long, his eyes are cast down. He steals a glance at his father and sees that he is displeased. Still his father loves him, and though disobedient he is still his father's child. After a while he gets up and comes slowly, till he creeps up between his father's knees, and putting his arm around him, with tears says, "Father, I disobeyed you to-day, but I am sorry for it; I am ashamed of it. Will you forgive me?" You that are fathers know what this father will do. He draws his child to his bosom, and as a big tear rolls down his cheek and drops on

the boy's head he says, "God bless you, my child, you have confessed it. Father forgives you." And the loving communion and confidence between father and child are restored. You are God's child, and have done something you ought not to do. You have not been living as you ought to live. Come to your heavenly Father and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Confess your sins, and your heavenly Father will draw you up close to himself, and shine away the clouds and make your soul glad and happy.

Hear now what God says to believers about *confessing their faults.* James v. 16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The word here translated "faults" is the same word that is translated "sin" in 1 John i. 9, and the new version has it sins in this passage. But I think it here refers to things that pertain to the relations between us as individuals, and not so much to the relation between us and God. "Confess your faults one to another." Here are two neighbors living right close together, sisters, let us say. They both have some faults, and they have been doing some things that are not just right toward each other. Perhaps they are unneighborly and unkind, and say unpleasant things, and make harsh criticisms. Let Sister Smith go to Sister Jones and say, "I have come this morning to confess my faults, and to say I am sorry that I have been so unkind and unaccommodating and

unneighborly; I want you to forgive me." What will Sister Jones do? She will respond in the very same spirit, "Yes, Sister Smith, I too have been very unkind and unneighborly; I have done wrong; I want to confess it; I want you to forgive me." Then they are both glad and happy in their mutual confession and forgiveness.

But what is the devil's plan? How does he, in this nineteenth century, pervert this scripture? The Bible says, "Confess your faults one to another," but we turn this command clear around. Very often Sister Smith will go to Sister Jones, and instead of confessing her own faults, begin to confess Sister Jones's faults: "I have come around to tell you how you have been doing, how unkind and unneighborly you have been, how many ugly things you have said about my husband and my children." "Yes," replies the other, "and I want to tell you about your faults," and then she pays back the abuse in the same spirit. The devil's plan is for Sister Smith to confess Sister Jones's faults, but God's plan is for Sister Smith to confess her own faults. Let us stand by God's commandment and confess our own faults one to another.

We now come to the two most solemn parts of this entire Bible reading. Let us see what God says about Christ's confession of his people. He not only requires us to confess him, but he promises also by and by to confess us. Hear what is written in Rev. iii. 5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess

his name before my Father and before his angels." It is a great day up yonder in the judgment before the great white throne. You know we are told in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." I imagine I hear the angel with the ink-horn who is to keep the record calling the roll. There is Christ sitting on the great white throne. The angel begins: "Abraham," and Jesus says, "Yes, I confess him;" "Isaac and Jacob," "Yes, I confess them;" "Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel," "Yes, I confess them all." Then the angel follows the long list on down to the apostolic times: "Saul of Tarsus," "Yes;" "Peter, James, and John," "Yes, they are mine." Then he comes to the record of the times of the Reformation: "Martin Luther," "Yes, he is mine." "John Knox, John Calvin, John Wesley," "They are all mine; I confess them." At last he comes on down to the list of those now living. I hear him begin to call those that we know, "Wilson, Mundy, Rose," "Yes, I confess them." And then I hear him say, "R. G. Pearson" How my heart will beat in that day! O friends, if I can just hear Jesus say, "Yes, he is mine, I confess him," that will be honor, and glory, and bliss and heaven; that will be worth all the toil and strife and pain and sorrow of earth. If Christ is mine, and he confesses me in that day, it will be joy and honor enough; this world can think and feel and say and do as it pleases about me and about every thing else.

Then when the angel begins to call the names of

those who are not written in the book of life, who of us here will be found in that number? Dear dying sinner, when he calls your name will the angel say, "He is not here, Lord Jesus; his name is not in the book?" Will Jesus turn to you and say, "I called but you refused; I stretched out my hand, but no man regarded; I know you not; depart from me." What an hour that will be for that worldly, Christless man, and for you devotees of fashion and society who live without God and slight and despise his word and his grace!

Now we come, in the last place, to the most solemn thing in all this Bible-reading—the unsaved sinner's final confession of Jesus Christ. Hear what God says in Phil. ii. 8–11: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Dear sinner, you must either bend your knee on the streets of the New Jerusalem in love and praise and joy, in adoration and thanksgiving, or bend it in shame and despair on the fiery pavement of an eternal hell. Bend it you must, bend it you shall. It is the edict of God that you and I and every one shall bow to Jesus Christ. I thank God for the privilege of obeying now. It is the highest honor here, and the highest glory in eternity.

What else do you learn? He has ordained that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. You will confess him here or hereafter. And either high up in God's pure and sinless heaven with the redeemed and blood-washed throng you will confess, with joy and gratitude and transports of bliss that Jesus is Christ, or with that tongue withered and scorched and blistered in the flames of hell you will make the same confession. The Son of God who left the glory of heaven and wore a crown of thorns and died an ignominious death, will by and by be honored by all the inhabitants of earth and hell and all the hosts of heaven. Dear Lord Jesus, there shall be a return for thy humiliation. "Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

THE text this morning is "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." —Heb. xii. 2.

I want to call your attention especially to the three words, "Looking Unto Jesus," and to gather some precious truths from five or six or seven verses of Scripture, each one of which presents Jesus Christ in a very distinct and a very important way. In reading and studying these verses we are to look unto Jesus, in order to see what he is to us. May the blessed Spirit take these things of Christ and show them unto us.

Why is Christ here spoken of as "the author and finisher of our faith?" What do these words imply? The idea is that Jesus Christ is the great file-leader—that is, he is the first and the only one that ever reduced the teachings of the gospel to experimental practice, without a mistake, without a fault or a flaw in his entire life. He is the file-leader. Of course he is the great foundation, the Alpha and Omega, and the light of the world; but

the idea here is that he is the great leader, and that all who embrace his faith are to follow him. Notice the context also, "Wherefore seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." In these words preceding the text you see three things: we have our weight our easily besetting sins; we have a race to run; and by reason of these things we need daily patience. O what need we have of patience in this great Christian conflict! In order that we may lay aside our weights and our besetting sins; in order that we may not get out of patience, let us keep our eyes on Jesus, our perfect leader, the great Exemplar of Christianity. If we do that, if we imitate him, it will be very little trouble to lay aside these weights —very little trouble to overcome these besetting sins. Nor will we lose our patience in the Christian race. The reason why so many start in this race and do not run well is, that they take their eyes off of Jesus. They do not follow in the steps of him who is the great Exemplar, and hence they get astray. It was when David turned his eyes in the wrong direction, and by taking them off of Christ that he was led into that awful sin.

Peter on one occasion asked the Master to let him come down out of the ship and walk to him on the water. Jesus gave him permission, and Peter started. I have no doubt when he first started he had his eyes fixed right on Christ, and

as long as he was looking at Christ he went forward without any trouble. But soon he began to see that great billow that was coming, and looking at it he took his eyes off of Jesus. He saw the foam-capped waves rolling up, and the ship rocking to and fro; and when he thus took his eyes from Christ and put them on the surroundings, the result was that he lost heart and faith and courage, and began to sink. It is just so with us. As long as we keep our eyes on Jesus, looking to him in faith and confidence as our example and guide and helper, so long will we walk and run with patience and delight; we will lay aside our besetting sins, and go on from victory to victory. But take your eyes off Jesus, and like Peter begin to survey the surrounding difficulties and dangers, or like David begin to look upon things that you ought not, you will get into trouble.

So you see that this is a very vital and a very practical topic, "Looking unto Jesus." Now, I want the Bible to do its own preaching. Let it make its own points and tell us in what respect we are continually to be "looking unto Jesus."

First, we are to look unto Jesus as our *Redeemer*. Gal. iii. 13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Christ is here presented as a Redeemer. I wish to speak first to the unsaved, and then to the saved. Will the unsaved in this audience now spend a few moments with me in looking to Jesus as their Redeemer? Friends, the fact is, hell has

a mortgage on your soul; and you can not redeem it; you have neither worth nor merit; you have no sufficiency. You are guilty, you are condemned, and justly condemned. You can not remove or satisfy the mortgage, and yet it must be satisfied or you are damned eternally. You can not do it; the church can not do it; the angels of God in heaven can not. Who can? We read over here in Rev. v. 9, where they sung a song, saying, "*Thou* art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Then who paid the price? It was the Lord Jesus Christ. His precious blood is the price of your redemption. So to speak he lifted hell's mortgage, and holds the papers to-day. Now, if you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, God says that Christ becomes the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. If you reject Christ then that terrible debt comes with its crushing weight upon you and you can not liquidate it, and hence you sink into hell. Or if you accept the Lord Jesus Christ, he, having paid the purchase price, acquits your soul and gives you eternal life.

But I imagine I hear some man, some lawyer perhaps, say, "If somebody else held the mortgage on my soul, and now Christ has died and paid the debt and taken up the papers, it seems to me that the papers have only changed hands. I do not understand that." The papers have changed hands, but they have changed into such hands and

on such terms that God can be just and the justifier of the guilty sinner. Suppose there is a marriageable young lady in your town. She is very heavily in debt and here is a man who holds a mortgage on all her possessions. There is another man in this town who is also a marriageable man. He goes to the one holding the mortgage and liquidates the debt, and takes up all the papers. Now, the papers have merely changed hands. The woman still owes the debt. But suppose this man who has paid the debt and holds the papers proposes marriage to the woman; and she accepts him as her husband. Is not the debt paid? Are not this woman and her husband one in the eyes of the law? Will any body say she is a dishonest woman if she never pays the man who satisfied the claims against her. No, the debt is paid. She did not pay it. Justice has been satisfied, nobody has been dishonored, and equity has not been trifled with.

Now, here is a terrible mortgage that hell had upon your soul. The Lord Jesus Christ paid the price, and now he holds the papers, hence the announcement in Revelation, "Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof." Christ paid the debt and holds the title deeds of your redemption. He comes and offers to be your Savior. You accept him and are accepted and become part and parcel of his invisible church, which in Bible phraseology is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Consequently the debt is paid,

but you did not pay it; God is honored, the law is satisfied, the claims of equity have all been met, and God can be just and the justifier of the sinner. Hence, that word of God: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Hence, that other statement of the Bible concerning those that have accepted this Redeemer: "Ye are complete in him;" completely saved, completely justified, completely forgiven. The debt is completely liquidated and wiped out.

But suppose the young lady whose mortgage has been cancelled says to the man that cancelled it, "No, sir, I will not accept you as my husband." He could say, "I have paid the debt, but I hold the papers and will execute the law." It is just so in your case sinner. If you reject the Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed you, refuse to have him for your Savior, he will say, "I have paid the price of your redemption and hold the title deeds, but since you reject me and choose death, the law must take its course. I must say to the executioner, 'Go forward.'" So you will be cast into hell, not to come out till you have paid the uttermost farthing. Dear dying sinner, what are you going to do with your Redeemer?

Now, a word with these Christians. I want you this morning, as God's people, to be looking to Jesus, your Redeemer. You read in God's word about Abraham and his wonderful fidelity; and you often wish that you could live just such a life as Abraham lived, a life of beautiful and consecrated consistency. You can live such a life, but in order

to do so you must learn the secret of Abraham's fidelity. Christ says, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad." Then Abraham was looking to Christ as his Redeemer; that was the secret of his faithfulness. It must be the secret of yours also. Fix your eyes upon Jesus, keep your thoughts upon him as the great Exemplar, whose foot-steps we must follow. Then like Abraham you will be faithful.

What was the secret of Moses' wonderful consecration to God, of his meekness and self-renunciation? We see him as he steps down from Egypt's throne and lays aside Egypt's crown and identifies himself with the despised Hebrews. What is the secret of it all? We are told in God's word. From the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we learn that Moses "endured as seeing him who is invisible." Moses had his faith fixed on the coming Christ as his Redeemer, and by faith he saw the glories of the Father. He saw another crown and a robe of righteousness; a blessed immortality with the Lord Jesus Christ beyond the stars. Egypt's toppling throne and crown were something to be laid aside. Ah, dear friends, did he not make a wise choice? See him after a while; he is dying up yonder on Pisgah's top, but God buried him, and the angels were his pall-bearers, and Michael guarded his tomb. The next time we see him he is on the Mount of Transfiguration with Elijah and with the Lord Jesus Christ in all the "excellent glory" of that wondrous scene.

The reason why the world looks so large to some of you to-day, the reason why a twenty dollar gold piece looks as big as a buggy wheel, is this: you have got the world and money so close to your eyes that you can not see any thing else. You can not see Jesus and his glory. Why are some of you so fascinated with your surroundings? Because you have never fixed your gaze on the Lord Jesus Christ. The best remedy to counteract worldliness and worldly-mindedness, sordidness and avarice, is to have our minds and hearts fixed on Christ; to see the glory and the beauty, the grandeur, the bliss and the exaltation of Christ Jesus and his kingdom. When we fix our eyes on Jesus and his glory all these earthly things will look as small to us as they did to Moses. Paul could say concerning all these things that worldly men prize so much, "I count them but dung that I may win Christ." The reason you are like Bunyan's old man with the muck rake, raking around in the trash of this world, is because you have never looked up and seen the glory and the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want you sorrowing, sad ones to look to Christ as your Redeemer this morning. You talk about sorrow and trial and suffering, but you know nothing about affliction in comparison with some men. Think of the afflictions of Job. In one short day all of his property is swept away, in another day all of his children died, in another day his health is gone, and he sits afflicted from head to foot with sore boils, scraping himself with a potsherd; in

another day all of his friends have forsaken him; then, the next day, come three miserable comforters, and they sit down a while and then say to him, "Thou art an old hypocrite; that is the reason all these afflictions have come upon thee." Then, to cap the climax, his wife comes to him and says, "Now, Job, curse God and die." Dear friend, what are your afflictions and trials compared with these? But where are Job's eyes fixed now? I imagine I hear him say, "Yes, my children are dead, my property and my health are gone. Here I sit scraping myself with a potsherd; forsaken by my friends; and here are these miserable comforters calling me a hypocrite, and here is the wife of my bosom telling me to curse God and die. But I know that my Redeemer liveth. Though he slay me yet will I trust him. Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." And that thought concerning the Redeemer and immortality was the one great thing that kept Job, and buoyed him up through this great trouble, and brought him out more than conqueror. Have you sorrow? Have you affliction? Then fix your eyes upon Jesus. Look to him as your Redeemer.

We should also look to Christ as our *leader*. Isa. lv. 4: "Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." The person here spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Father has given us as a leader. He is our leader in every thing, especially in the faith, and as the divine pattern whose example we are to follow. Hence Peter says, "Christ also

suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." That is the Christian's business, not to try to keep up with the ungodly world, not to "put on style," or be like those in this or that circle of godless sinners—but to follow in the steps of Jesus. The Christian's mission on earth is to look to God and follow the foot-prints of Jesus in self-denying, consecrated service. It matters not what your lot in this life may be, nor which way your path may lead, you are to follow the steps of Jesus. If you are walking in the pathway of poverty, the foot-prints of Jesus are there; if your path is along the way of persecution and sorrow, Jesus has traveled that road, also, for we are told that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. If yours is the way of self-denial, the foot-prints of Jesus are there. He pleased not himself.

And when we come to the Jordan of death there are the foot-prints of Jesus on this side; and as we go down into the dark waters and into the grave, his foot-prints are there. He has gone before us, not only through the Jordan and through the grave, but there on the other side we will still have his foot-prints to guide us. We will follow them as they go up the evergreen mountains of God, to the very throne of the Father. We will follow them then while we live, and when we are dying, and after death. Do you talk about pleasure and happiness? This is the highest pleasure and the most enduring and unmixed happiness—following the foot-prints of Jesus.

Some of you church members are like little children: you are always wanting a rule for every thing you are to do, or not to do. Now, rules are very good for children; principles are for men. Let me lay down a principle, and you can, if you want to, convert it into a rule, by which you can settle all these questions. Some people are always asking themselves, What is the harm in this, and what is the harm in that? Is it right to do this? Is it wrong to do that? Here is the principle by which you can settle all these questions: Which way do the foot-prints of Jesus lead? Whichever way they lead I will follow. You can always settle exactly which way you ought to go. You will not find the foot-prints of Jesus going into a theater, nor to a card party; you will not be led by the foot-prints of Jesus into desecrating God's holy Sabbath day, nor into the ball-room or gambling-hall or saloon.

You can not go into these places where Jesus never went and at the same time follow him. Here is the great question you are always to ask yourself: If Jesus were here what would he do? If Jesus were here which way would he go? As long as you go the way Christ would go and do the things you believe Jesus would do, you will not go astray. Remember that our duty and safety, as well as our happiness, require us to follow the foot-prints of Jesus.

We are also to look unto Jesus as our *commander*. Isa. lv. 4: "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and a commander to the

people." The Lord Jesus, then, is our commander, and, mark it, his commands are supreme. No other commands, no other allegiance, no other sway, are to interrupt or supersede his. What is the business of a soldier? It is not to speculate about the commands, not to ask why they were given, but to obey. What are the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ? "Deny yourself, take up your cross, follow me daily." He does not say, "Follow me simply during the evangelistic meeting," but "follow me during the holidays, through the working days, throughout this whole year, and through all the years of your life."

What other commands has he given us through the Holy Ghost, and the prophets and apostles? He says to his people, "Come out from the world and be separate." He commands us to avoid the appearance of evil, to let our light so shine that men may see our good works. If you want to settle any question of duty settle it by God's word. A great many people—church members—when they want to do a certain thing, go to a preacher about it; they ask the advice of their pastor, or some other preacher. If the preacher condemns the thing they want to do, they say, "O well, his opinion is nothing, he do n't know any more about it than I do," but if he indorses what they want to do, then his word is law and authority; and they never stop to ask what God says about it.

I will give you an illustration: I was holding a meeting in a town in Mississippi. I there met a young lady, a member of a certain church in a

town close by in Alabama, who was very fond of dancing. She said to me one day, "Mr. Pearson, my pastor, the Rev. Dr. So-and-So"—and, by the way, he was quite a doctor—"my pastor says there is no harm in dancing, and, therefore, there *is* no harm in it, and I am going to dance as much as I please." What was the poor, silly girl doing? She was shaping her conduct and life by the words of a man, when that man was not guided by the word of Almighty God. A certain preacher in Brooklyn—I will not name him — preached a sermon in which he seemed in some sense to justify dancing, or apologize for it. It was published, and a young man whom I knew cut this part of the sermon out of the paper, and carried it in his pocket, showing it around as if it had all the authority of a divine oracle. Whenever any body said any thing to him about the ball-room or the dance, he would draw forth his paper and say, "Here is what the Rev. Mr. Blank says on this question." Now, let me say, love and respect and honor pastors and teachers and evangelists if they are true men, godly men, who give you a "thus saith the Lord" to justify their teachings. But I care not for Doctor this or that, or for any man's authority or opinion, unless it is backed up by the plain, emphatic, distinct testimony of God's word. Christ is my commander, Christ gives me my orders, and my business is to know his orders and to follow them. May God help us all to obey Christ as our commander. What would you think of a soldier claiming to belong to a certain general's

command, and yet going around obeying the orders of somebody else?

We are also to look unto Jesus as our *friend.* Prov. xviii. 24: "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." What friend is so good, so true, so kind, and so mighty a defender as Jesus? Sinner, he is just the friend you need; saint, he is just the friend you need. He is never untrue. He never misunderstands us. He blesses us while we are living, he sustains and comforts us in death. He is a friend and Savior after death and throughout eternity. Whoever trusts and follows him will find how much better Jesus is than all other friends.

You remember when President Garfield was dying, how his wife sat there by his bedside, and held on to his hand until he had gone down so far into the dark river that she could go with him no farther. She must let go that hand, and he passed beyond her reach or help. It is so with all earthly friends; they can go with us so far, but no farther. At last they must let go our hands. There is a boundary line across which our wives, our husbands, our children, and our parents can not go with us. There that sweet friendship must cease, there human love can no longer minister to us or comfort us. But, thank God, Jesus goes with us not only through life, but when we come to die, and when the hand of our dearest earthly friend slips from the grasp, the Lord Jesus Christ is there, and he says, "I will hold thy right hand."

Thank God, he leads us up the banks on the other side.

You remember the story of that faithful friend of Napoleon Bonaparte, who for eighteen long years guarded his silent remains there on the Island of St. Helena. You call that friendship, friendship after death. But we have a better friend than that, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will guard our sleeping dust, not simply for eighteen years, but till the trump of God shall wake the dead. Then, in the resurrection morning, he will raise our sleeping dust and fashion it like unto his own glorious body. He will take us into his own blessed heaven.

Dear saints of God, shall we be untrue to such a friend as that? Shall we ally ourselves with his enemies? Shall we say we are friends of Jesus Christ, and then, at the same time, be "hail fellows well met" with all of his enemies? I want to illustrate the perfidy, the spiritual adultery, of those people that say they are friends of Jesus Christ, and then ally themselves with his enemies. Suppose a man and wife live across the street, and another man lives in the house adjoining. These two men meet in the street; they get into a wrangle, and one deliberately and in cold blood murders the other. Now, suppose in the course of two or three months you see the woman whose husband was murdered walking down the street and leaning on the arm of her husband's murderer, looking up into his face and smiling, saying by her very demeanor, "I am delighted and just where I

want to be. This is the company in which I find my highest happiness." What would every true man and woman think? All would think and say, "She is disloyal to her husband's memory; she is not a true wife." Now, here is the Lord Jesus Christ the bridegroom, and here are those that say they are the bride, the Lamb's wife. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world once, and this heartless, godless world, deceitful and desperately wicked, murdered him on the cross. And here are people who say they love Jesus, people who claim him as their friend and their bridegroom. See them at the world's balls and card parties and carousals—at every place where Jesus is dishonored and scoffed at—leaning on the arm of that depraved and godless world that has crucified and murdered the Bridegroom. People who do this may be church members, but I tell you, they are guilty of spiritual adultery, moral whoredom against Almighty God. God said of Israel that for their whoredom he would send them into exile and wipe them out as a nationality. Dear friends, shall we thus turn our backs on our Lord and go and mingle with his enemies? If I am not true to Jesus I do not want to be faithful to any thing or any body. When I break faith with Jesus Christ let my heart break and let my soul go down into perdition. Christ says, "Ye are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you."

Again, we are to look to Jesus as our *advocate.* 1 John ii. 1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus

Christ the righteous." That is, he is our attorney, so to speak; we are his clients; we have put every thing into his hands; he will plead our cause up yonder. In Revelation, xii. 10, the devil is called the accuser of the brethren, and he accuses them day and night before our God. I have no doubt he says, "God Almighty, are you going to take that young man and bring him unto heaven, when many times I have seen him sin and break your law? How are you going to be just and take that man into heaven?" Then Jesus Christ says, "Father, all that the devil said about that man is true; but Father, I paid the precious price of redemption; I satisfied the mortgage; I have met the law's demands. I offered him complete, absolute pardon through faith, and now he stands in me complete. Father, what there is against him put it down to my account." Thank God, what deficit there is in our account the Lord Jesus will make all right. Church member, how can you be untrue to such a Savior?

We are to look to Jesus also as our *elder brother*. John xx. 17: "Jesus said unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God."

Christ then is our Elder Brother. People talk about being akin to the great families of earth, to the aristocracy; I care very little for that. I want to be akin to the Lord Jesus Christ, and I thank God that the mystic blood of Jesus Christ, the

Prince of Peace, the Son of God, flows in the veins of every one who has accepted him by faith. We are akin to the aristocracy of the skies. I belong to the first families of heaven; I am a brother of the royal house of Jesus. He is our blessed kinsman, our glorious Redeemer and Elder Brother.

We are taught also to look unto Jesus as our *Judge.* Acts xvii. 31: "Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." He is to be our Judge. Sinner, does not your heart sometimes quake and tremble at the thought that you are to stand before your Redeemer whom you are slighting, before the Son of God, as your judge? You have trampled his blood under your feet, you have spurned his love, you have rejected his message, you have despised his overtures of salvation, yet you must stand before him and receive judgment for your deeds. You limp and lavender, slack-twisted church members, that play cards and dance and go to theaters, and live just as you did before you pretended to have religion, does it not make you quake and tremble to think you are going to stand before that Judge? Do you know what he says to you? As he said to Laodicea of old, since you are neither hot nor cold—you are not hot enough to be in a glorious, blessed revival, nor yet so cold but that you go to church on Sundays—as you are neither hot nor cold, Christ says, "I will spew you out of my mouth."

But, earnest, faithful followers of the Lord Jesus, does it not cheer and gladden your hearts that you will stand before Jesus? I thank God that I am finally to be judged by Jesus Christ. Why? He is my Redeemer; that Redeemer is my Leader; that Leader is my Commander; that Commander is my Friend; that Friend is my Elder Brother, and that Elder Brother is my Judge.

Lastly, we are to look unto Jesus as our *all and in all.* Col. iii. 11: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all." Christ is the all and in all of our redemption, of our justification and regeneration; of our hopes and joys. Some people talk a great deal about going to heaven; they want to go to heaven, and that seems to be the goal of their ambition. I want to go to heaven if Jesus is there, and if Jesus is not there I do not care any thing about it. I want to go to heaven: yes; but I do not like to hear any body put heaven above Jesus Christ, and talk so much about going to heaven and so little about being with Jesus. Let us stick to the old Bible phraseology, to the form of sound words as well as sound doctrine. Paul said, "I have a desire to depart"—and go to heaven? No. "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ." If heaven is heaven it is because Jesus is there, and Christ is the all and in all of heaven.

Now, in conclusion, may I relate a little incident that illustrates the true idea of heaven? In a certain city there was a father and a mother, and they

had a lovely little girl. The mother was taken very sick, and grew worse until they had to send the little one away to a neighbor's house; and finally the mother died, and was buried. After two or three days they let the child come back home, and as soon as she came in she ran into her mother's room and said, "O mamma; where is my mamma?" She ran back then into the sitting room, calling, "O mamma?" Then she ran into the dining-room and said, "Where is my mamma?" At last some one put his hand on her little head and said, "Darling, your mamma is not here; she is gone." Then the child said, "If mamma is not here I don't want to stay. Let me go away." Friends, when I get to heaven and walk up the streets of the New Jerusalem, I want to see Paul and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; and I am going to ask them, "Where is my Savior? Where is my Lord who died to redeem me?" And I think if they were to tell me, "He is not here," I would say, "I don't want to stay. It is not heaven for me if my Lord is not here." And I think I would feel as Mary felt at his empty tomb, "They have taken my Lord away and I know not where they have laid him." It will be heaven because Jesus is there.

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